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THE GREEK GIRL.

THE

GREEK GIRL;

A TALE, IN TWO CANTOS.

BY

JAMES WRIGHT SIMMONS.

"I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee."

LEAR: Act III. Sc. II.

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TO

THE PRESIDENT AND FACULTY

OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY,

THESE PAGES ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY AND WITH GREAT DIFFIDENCE

Inscribed,

BY ONE WHO TOOK NO "HONORS," FIRST OR
SECOND, AT THE VENERABLE INSTITUTION OVER WHICH
THEY PRESIDE, AND OF WHICH HE WAS AN UNWORTHY PUPIL;
AND WHO NOW COMES, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF APOLLO,
TO ASK, AT THE HANDS OF THAT BENIGN MOTHER,
FORGIVENESS FOR HIS EARLY DELINQUENCIES.

THE AUTHOR.

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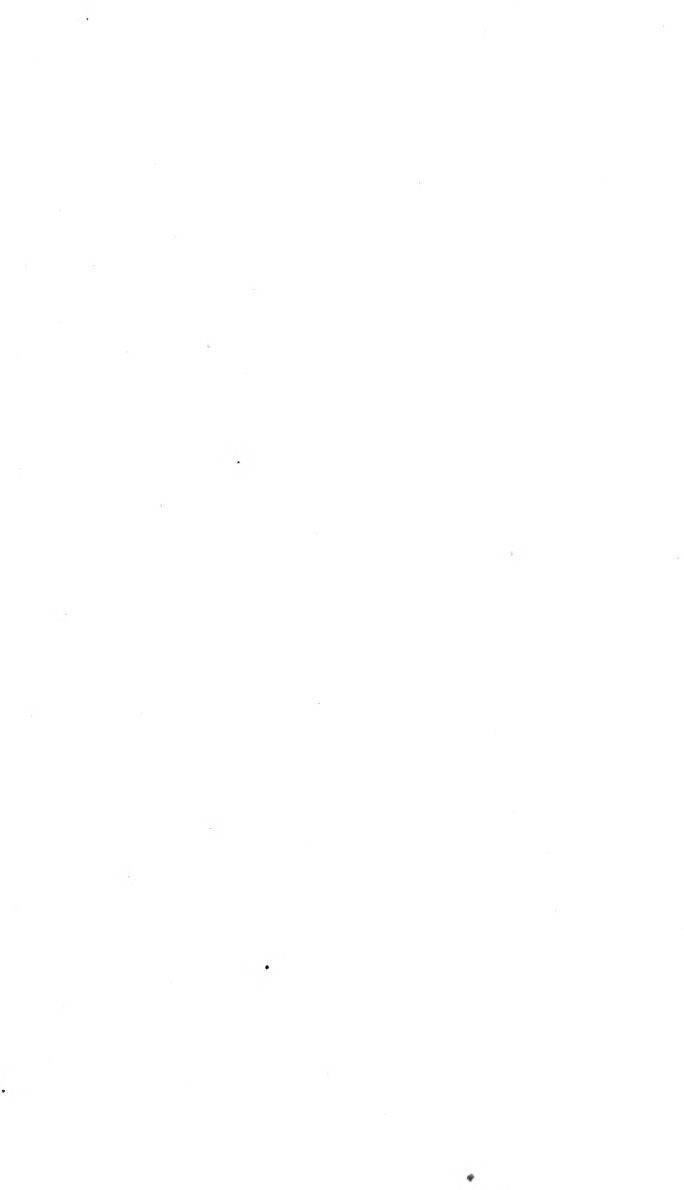
A GREEK maiden, of gentle birth, but parentless, whom the casualties of Eastern warfare had reduced to the condition of a Mohammedan slave, and who, by a similar casualty, is restored to her original and far more appropriate character, that of a heroine—is introduced to the reader in the following pages. The objection (in itself objectionable) to Powers's fine Statue—namely, the absence of all drapery—will not apply in the present instance, as I have sought to array Inez in a garb which, if not strictly classical, is at least in keeping with Oriental taste. Should she prove in other respects as unexceptionable as in this, she will have reason to felicitate herself as a poetical débutante.

With regard to the young gentleman, her lover, I have little to say—except that he is not likely to conciliate the personal feelings of the reader. The

fault, if such it be, is not mine ; and we should not quarrel with nature because she does not fashion all her clay alike. And yet in this age of Utilitarianism, and even in this New World, we appear to recognise, with a ready subserviency, the distinctions which Wealth would create for itself ; and, though we stop there, it is for reasons not less characteristic. Intellectually, we are the practical advocates of a *levelism* even lower than that which, more than his misdeeds, consigned Charles I. to the block, and entailed contempt upon a revolutionary Egalité. Nature, however, does not adapt her works to suit our systems. The consequence not unfrequently is, that we seek to discredit her human porcelain—not because it is more costly than delf, but because *we* do not partake of it. “A fixed star,” says the author of the “Night Thoughts,” “is as much in the bounds of nature as a flower of the field, though less obvious”—and, he might have added, less likely to *please*. But is it any justification, that we should *bay* this “star,” because we cannot bask in its beams ? Poetry—which, Bacon tells us, “seeks to accommodate the shows of things to the desires of the mind”—is not likely to dwell with those the scope of whose mental vision is forever narrowed down to the vulgar surface

of the earth on which they walk. " Nothing comes of nothing." If mere utility, however respectable, is alone to claim our consideration, the workshop of the artisan will be our only Parthenon ; and for him and his kindred co-laborers alone our mausoleums will be reared.

THE AUTHOR.



THE GREEK GIRL.



CANTO I.



THE GREEK GIRL.

CANTO I.

I.

LONG years ! long years ! the Pyramids still stand,
But where are those who rear'd them ? — will the Nile
Send up his mighty voice from out that land,
And tell us *who* built each stupendous pile ?
Cheops, or Cephus ? — it is writ in sand !
The “Seven Wonders” ! — mortal, weep, or smile —
Still heaves the desert round each haughty base,
The men are gone — scarce known their name, or race !

II.

And this is all ! and this is much — it teaches
Mankind humility — but will they learn ?

The moral's almost daily, yet it reaches
No further than the eye, until we earn
The sober truth by trials that make breaches
Within the breast — its nature then grows stern ;
And self-neglect sometimes succeeds self-knowledge,—
A truth transcending those of school or college.

III.

O Time — O Saturn ! ye are much the same,—
Ye prey alike on your own progeny !
Their boasted wisdom often but a name,
That lives, perhaps, through half a century,
When, lo ! the oracle grows trite and tame,
Or proves, in fact, a mere mendacity !
Napoleons of Wit, that charm'd our youth,
Like Chivalry, but fictions,* — taken for truth !

* When that "delightful Vision" (as he described the Queen of France) that had made such a deep impression upon the noble sensibilities of Burke, vanished before the frightful glare of the Guillotine, in a burst of impassioned eloquence, he exclaimed, "The age of Chivalry is gone !" It never existed, it seems. Hear Sismondi: "Cet heroïsme universel, nous avons nommé la Chevalerie, n'exista jamais comme fictions brillantes."—*Histoire Française : Introduction*, p. 20.

IV.

The "Little Corporal"! what is he now?
Thunders his cannon 'neath the Pyramid,
Or neighs his war-steed 'mid the Alpine snow?
Where flouts his banner? Moscow, or Madrid?
Along the Pyrenean, or the Po?
Approach the Isle, and lift the mould'ring lid
Of the Imperial coffin, and behold
A lesson twice two thousand ages old!

V.

What are its fruits? Heaven knows how other men
May think, or feel — but, for my own poor part,
There are some truths I would not learn again,
Nor *can* — alas, the teacher was the heart!
Which, undeceiv'd too late! recoils in pain;
And we must have recourse, at last, to art!
Instruction's o'er! or if, to those who feel,
One lesson still remains, 'tis — to *conceal*.

VI.

'Tis a hard task! and we reject, at first,
The frigid caution of the selfish breast;

Children of the mind, the more they're nurst,
Thoughts grow the nearer to their place of rest,
If it be rest ! and, though the heart should burst,
That agony must still be self-confest ;
Nor prayer hath exorcis'd, nor priest hath shriv'd
A mind resolv'd to perish as it liv'd.

VII.

Though pompous Folly may adorn the bier,
And hollow mourners gather in the train
Of him whom still they hate, but cease to fear !
Th' accustom'd crowd, who still play o'er again
The self-same farce in each succeeding year,
Or month, or week — the pleasure " physics pain ;"
What though with crab-like gait they track the hearse,
The dead bequeaths them his contempt, or curse !

VIII.

The secret foe, or he who, basely brave,
Speeds the loud calumny from door to door ;
Kind, gentle friends, who, if they do not save
Or spare your feelings, show their love the more !

Behold the host who gather round the grave,
Zealous to serve when all your wants are o'er !
What though a prison or a poison kill ?
To grace one's obsequies is something still !

IX.

The sun was rising, as a pale, proud boy
Mounted his steed, and sought the distant wood ;
Did love await him there, or the fierce joy
Of those who cool the lip of hate in blood ?
Ambition's musings did his thoughts employ,
Or early sorrow at his bosom brood ?
He stretch'd him in the quiet of that shade,
Nor dream'd of war, nor yet of blooming Maid !

X.

To him th' insufferable city rose
Like the dread words that shook th' Assyrian's soul !¹
Its petty triumphs, and its pompous woes,
Its selfish virtues, tending to the goal
Of ultimate advantage ;—its breath that blows

The plague-spot to the heart ! — its low control,* —
Stamp'd it but as the slave-mart of his race,
Fit haunt of crime, the base-born and the base.†

XI.

In years a boy, in tendencies averse
From boyish sports, he grew in loneliness ;
Prone in each mood with Nature to commerce,
Unveil'd on mountain, or in green recess, —
Society was solitude ; the curse,
That hangs upon its hours, for him grew less,
As, day by day — its rising powers unfurl'd —
Of his own mind he fashion'd his own world.

XII.

Not the dim cell of the dull Anchorite,
He did survey the Universe ! — its page,

* The sullen Cares,
And frantic Passions *hear* thy soft control.

Gray : Prog. of Poesy, 1, 2.

† It is, I hope, unnecessary to say, that no exceptionable allusion is intended in these lines, which are simply expressive of the fact, that all large cities are but markets where the passions are bought and sold.

Ample as time, in letters form'd of light,
He conn'd with deeper feeling than the Sage ;
On Rapture's wing he soar'd no middle flight ;
Eagle, escap'd its bars, that spurn'd its cage !
And, as his spirit kindl'd, the rapt boy
Wept from excess of undefin'd, strange joy !

XIII.

Shunning the crowd, but not as hating it,
He reap'd the fruits of the world's selfishness,
(Whose annals are not fables, falsely writ !*)
And, one by one, the ties grew daily less
That in fine spirits are so closely knit ;
With little left his early lot to bless,
His rising bosom turn'd to other zone,
Chill'd by late coldness, not to marble grown !

XIV.

Feelings subside, while lives the fatal root
From which they spring ; and if his heart had lost

* Bolingbroke thought differently.

Each sterner impulse, and his voice was mute,
(Promethean sufferance, of all the most !)
He had not ceas'd to feed on bitter fruit ;
So sleeps the surface of some desert coast,
Tho' o'er its sands no flowers of love can blow,
Its living waters still lie quick below !

XV.

Meridian still, the flaming fervor reign'd,
Beneath whose warmth he knelt to Beauty's eyes !
Not those that linger till the lights have wan'd
In dull assembly — the pale Paradise
Of passion passionless ! — the God, profan'd,
From regions cold and dead indignant flies !
O Love ! thy temple is the holier heart
Of those who from the world still dwell apart !

XVI.

Thou wert not made to bide amid the throng
Of courts ; or in the peopled solitude
Of cities, to contend with wrath and wrong ;
And bear the brunt of the ignoble feud

Man wages with his fellow through the long
Dull day, or year; — with heavenlier thought imbu'd,
Thy spirit, given with power to curse or bless,
Pines for the valley, or the wilderness !

XVII.

The steed that bore him to the early wood,
Tramps he the war-horse now 'neath Eastern skies ?
Where the fierce Ottomite in battle stood,
Where flashing steel from Grecian scabbard flies,
And reeling cross and crescent, bath'd in blood,
An instant falter, as a Hero dies !
Where thickest fell the cannon's sulph'rous night,
Stood Oscar, shadowing a Form of light !*

XVIII.

A Suliote mother stamp'd that faultless mould
Of Beauty clad in armor, dreamlike there !†

* In the noblest part of Jewish types we find the Cherubim shadowing the mercy-seat. — *Sir Thos. Browne*.

† The Suliotes were celebrated for their heroic resistance to the Turks.

A touching history, and briefly told
To one who treasur'd it with eager ear !
As, snatching her light form, where surging roll'd
The purple torrent in its fierce career !
To well known fields he bore his radiant prize,
Mute love and wonder struggling through her eyes !

XIX.

Alas, where should she go ? * She had no home !
The world was but one wilderness to her,
Where, like that bird that left the Ark, to roam
Over the waste of waters, and incur
The racking winds of that remorseless foam !
She scarce could hope for rest amid the stir
And ever-tossing waves of life's dark sea —
A bark so frail could only founder'd be !

XX.

In other arms than those assum'd, of late,
To cleave the Moslem's chain — a slave no more !

* Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires. Where should Othello go ?

ACT. V. SCENE II.

Well pleas'd to be releas'd from their rude weight,
She stood reveal'd in the sweet sex she bore ;
And worthy was she of an Emperor's state, —
Or, rather, of her own celestial shore !
Too high-soul'd and too pure the couch to share
Of aught save Bard, or knightly Cavalier !

XXI.

One ankle, small and delicate, appear'd
Sweetly disclos'd from underneath the dress,
Which, jealous even of the part it spar'd,
Would not give more, but, ah, *could* not give less !
The stocking, of soft, glowing silk, adher'd
Firmly tenacious of the loveliness
Conceal'd beneath it ; while the pale, pink shoe
Clung to the small foot, as if there it grew !

XXII.

Her dress, when Oscar found her, though a child,
Bespoke her rank ; her bodice was in form
A Cuirass set with stars, that like a shield
Protected her young bosom 'mid the storm

Of battle! — her long hair, that floated wild
In waving tresses gemm'd with shells from Orm,
Gave to her aspect and her motions all
That Fancy loves in visions to recall!

XXIII.

Her head-dress was of satin, edg'd with gold,
And parti-color'd ribbands, forming bows,
That wav'd behind in many a graceful fold;
A saffron band encircl'd her fair brows,
Of more than Grecian outline, — soft, yet bold;
With all that intellectual grace that throws
A charm round Beauty richer than her eyes,
A lustre and a glory from the skies!

XXIV.

The dark and heavy ringlets, clust'ring 'neath
The head-dress, fell at times beside the cheek,
Veiling its richness, where Love seem'd to breathe
A balmy fragrance stealing o'er the streak,
Pomegranate-like, which youth there seem'd to leave;
While one deep feeling, which alone could speak

In language eloquent as that fair face !
Left o'er its lines the lustre of its trace.

XXV.

“ Oscar ” — her pale lip quiver'd, and her eye
Moisten'd a moment — “ do you leave, then ? ”
Oscar's cheek color'd — “ You are silent ! — I
Am answer'd ! Be it so. I'll not again
Renew the question ; that your destiny
Takes you from me, is certain ! — 't is in vain
To tell you all now lab'ring at my heart —
I know it is decided, and — we part !

XXVI.

Take these poor flowers back, they've lost their bloom !
Like all such gifts, however rich, when those
Who gave them prove, like thee, unkind ! — a gloom,
Reflected from the uncomplaining woes
Of her who wore, would tinge them like her doom !
Where'er thou go'st, this bosom with thee goes !
If thou to me art nothing, O recall
Thy vow, and take it back, like these — take all ! ”

XXVII.

The last word falt'ring died upon her tongue !
Like one who dreaded to be left alone,
To Oscar's bosom tremblingly she clung,
As though unto his heart she would have grown !
Gently remov'd, one beauteous hand now hung
Pale as the lily there, and drooping down
Beside the rich folds of a form too fair,
Too tempting, yet too eloquently dear !

XXVIII.

O gazing thus, and could he hope to wean
From his the love that nestl'd in his arm ?
And that fair face, in sorrow still serene !
Her head reclin'd upon his left, while, warm,
And gently swelling, soft, and scarcely seen,
Her bosom lay beneath him like a charm !
Whilst the frail lawn, that veil'd it, half reveal'd
The sweet mystery, imperfectly conceal'd.

XXIX.

He rais'd the face that droop'd upon his breast,
While, half unclos'd, the dark lids of the eye

At once her passion and her grief confest !
The brow was pale, and, o'er its lines of high
And perfect beauty, Sorrow had imprest
A melancholy trace that seem'd to lie,
Pillow'd and sleeping in its lovely shroud,
Like darkness stealing o'er a silver cloud.

XXX.

In Oscar's bosom mix'd emotions vied,
And sway'd by turns ; but still, whate'er might be
The whisperings of passion, or of pride,
A better feeling gain'd the mastery,
To selfish natures never yet allied ;
Looking to him she turn'd all helplessly —
O could he have requited her with evil,
He had been less than man, and more than devil !

XXXI.

Some painful recollections hedg'd him in,
Not such divinities as guard a throne !
He knew the world full well, for he had been —
Though principally living in his own —

Partaker of its sorrow and its sin ;
It *had* a heart, only 't was one of stone !
Mid-Lothian like — a prison where the weeper
Is starveling Wit, and witless Wealth the keeper.

XXXII.

The truth is, his affairs were ebbing low,
And at a time of life when such things prove,
To say the least of it, *mal-apropos* !
For with such loss one's apt to lose the love
Of people in all stations, as things go ;
Your friends consider you but one remove
From enemies ; whilst men, once secret foes,
Fancy they *then* may tread upon your toes !

XXXIII.

Sad sight ! on Fortune's faithless wheel revers'd,
To see one's old acquaintance taking leave,
In cautious couples pairing off, at first —
When one's affairs, being just upon the eve
Of an explosion, now sublimely burst !
When that is over, men cease to deceive

Themselves, or you — and thus we all discern why
The poet wrote his “Facilis Averni”!

XXXIV.

And then, perhaps, our mistress leaves us, too!
When one falls off, the rest are apt to follow;
Fidelity on earth's a thing which you
(The human heart at bottom is so hollow!)
May meet with, possibly, in one or two;
But most wives, seeing the grave their first love swallow,
Forget the loss in some new idol's clasp —
Ah, Cleopatra! why prefer an Asp?

XXXV.

Oscar had still some friends in England, where
His gentle birth secur'd him cold respect;
A distant kinswoman had caught a Peer,
Who mov'd, of course, in what is call'd “select
Society” — which means so much a year!
In tone and style not scandal could detect
The slightest blemish in th' exclusive Peeress,
Who heir'd, 't was said, each virtue, being an Heiress!

XXXVI.

She had, from early childhood, been design'd
To fill a station in the public eye ;
Some care had been bestow'd upon her mind,
But more upon her manners, which were high
And full of graceful bearing ; 'twixt the wind
Nought interven'd and her nobility !
Her temper being in certain matters pliable,
To prepossessions render'd her quite liable.

XXXVII.

Painting and statuary had their charms
For Lady Clementina Clarington ;
She could draw heads, too, and excell'd in arms !
(I know a feminine Pygmalion,
Beneath whose touch the statue sometimes warms !)
Not that I mean her ladyship was one ;
Though the censorious *did* say *her* " Ideal "
Was but a concentration from the real.

XXXVIII.

She had a passion, too, for the Antique, —
Adrian's male minion seem'd to charm her most ;

The lips had tempted her — (could they but speak !)
To press them, little caring for the cost ;
She took a caste, or two, from the old Greek,
And sigh'd, as she survey'd them, to think lost
Th' immortal forms that could so well express
All that the heart must feel, but not confess !

XXXIX.

She seem'd, at length, to have imbib'd disgust
And sovereign aversion for the men
And manners of the age ; and to distrust
Her better taste, or her discernment, when
But half inclin'd to praise a modern Bust !
So she recurr'd to the antique again,
With a determination to extract
Emotions which in most cases react !

XL.

Such was the lady, but not such her lord, —
Whose only merit was the care bestow'd
On one whom he had nurtur'd, and ador'd !
Who, in return for feelings that still glow'd,

Made him the daily butt at his own board !
And once dispatch'd him journeying on the road,
To make his bow at Windsor, or St. James's,
For honors that prov'd bubbles, like the Thames's !

XLI.

Should not a man be wise at Forty, pray ?
I know not how *that* may be, but I know,
Let him be learn'd from Socrates to Say,
A lady will not willingly bestow
(Especially a lady in her May)
Upon such years her love, like sun on snow ! *
The Lady Clementina look'd like Spring,
Her Lord like Saturn † — but without his wing !

XLII.

But, being a Peer, he was in Parliament,
Discussing the two nations — for the cloud,

* This, to the honor of the sex, is, in general, true. The *rich* exceptions, to be sure, are of a character somewhat startling ; and constitute, at the same time, a pretty large minority.

† Time.

That had been low'ring over France, now sent
Its shadow o'er the Isles ! and long and loud
The thunder of the tempest that had rent
The Gallic hills, came mutt'ring in its shroud !
Whose angry echoes startl'd even Burke, —
As you may see by turning to his work : —

XLIII.

“ Reflections,” full of proud and lofty thought,
Intemperate, perchance — such was the man ;
The elements within him were so wrought,
He had renounc'd his birth-right sooner than
Conform to other men's opinions ; fraught
With daring doubts his lost career began ; *
Ambition was the main-spring of his mind,
That like a giant tower'd above his kind, —

* It is scarcely necessary to say, that allusion is here had to the political life of the “ Great Commoner,” who merged the man of genius in the politician,

“And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.”

The truth is, that “our good Edmund” was as little in his proper element in a House of Commons, as would have been Dr. Johnson there. Wraxall says he was “*continually coughed down.*”

XLIV.

And taught him that worst policy, that last
Infirmity of Intellect, disdain
For those in the Olympic race surpast
By his great genius — not content to reign
Monarch of its own world — and one so vast !
But, baring his bright weapon to the stain
Of earthlier conflict, sought th' arena, where, —
Like the cag'd Eagle, barr'd its mountain air !

XLV.

His mighty spirit droop'd amid the throng
Of meaner men, in whose trite element
The wing that had been wont to soar along
Its native Heaven, sunk ! and loftiest powers — lent
For Immortality ! — reap'd wrath and wrong
In the dull crowd, and secret discontent —
Since lost the guerdon of the fool, or sot,
Honors — more empty than the bones that rot !

XLVI.

His Lordship took the lead in a debate
Which it was thought might occupy the House

Beyond its usual limits ; 't was his fate
(*He* thought it glory !) — always to espouse
The wrong side of a subject : “ He would state
The question briefly ; and he hop'd his views, —
'T would be conceded him ” —— a general groan
Burst from the benches might have chill'd a stone !

XLVII.

But not the placid gentleman, I trow,
Who went on plunging in the blank profound
Of his own fancies ; and, when once *below*,
He challeng'd ordinary minds to sound
The depth of his analysis ! and so, —
As the Mole sees and searches under ground, —
Pleas'd with himself, he labor'd on his way,
For what to them was night, to him was day !

XLVIII.

He lit on error not from chance, or choice,
But from an impulse he could not control ;
You gather'd from his action and his voice,
The strong *conviction* that constrain'd his soul ;

And naturally led him to rejoice
In blunders which he manag'd, on the whole,
T' expound so well by rhetoric and rule,
As serv'd to show the Statesman in the Fool !²

XLIX.

Young Oscar and his lady-love lay sleeping —
Ah, happy — did such sleepers ne'er awake !
To know and feel that they have cause for weeping,
And learn how much the hearts can bear that break !
The trial's hard, where we must still be keeping,
Aloof from all that earth can give, or take,
A single recollection — one emotion, —
Deep at the core, like rocks beneath the ocean.

L.

And such the struggle Passion must sustain,
When, side by side, — no matter how sincere, —
Love walks with Error — for they part in pain,
Who meet in guilt ! the penalty's severe,
No doubt — but we must bear it, nor complain ;
The world, whose virtue flames out once a year,

Still claims its victim, sear'd in heart or thought —
Behold, the *Christian's* car of Juggernaut!

LI.

And thus we're doubly losers in the end,
Mind, fortune, morals, and our youth expended,
We find, at last, that we have got no friend!
Where most begin, our brief career has ended;*
No more on us may those fond hopes descend,
With which the day-dreams of the boy were blended!
Sad thought! that in our hours of self-inspection,
Occasions us some serious reflection!

LII.

You cannot couch the Intellect, which sees
Darkly, as through a glass of its own fashion;
And nurtures, till it grows into disease,
Th' idiosyncrasy of pride and passion!
Born with these failings, it subsides with these —
As the grim Hurricane! whose winds will dash on,

* "At nine and twenty," said Napoleon to Joseph, "I have exhausted every thing."

Nor pause, remorseless ! till their o'er-blown wrath
Hath scatter'd desolation in their path !

LIII.

Oscar appear'd averse from marriage — why ?
It might be pride — a thing always perverse, —
Kept him aloof from the servility
(For such it is, or something else still worse)
Of him who dangles in a lady's eye,
And vows his deep devotion — to her purse !
With well affected fervor plays his part,
Until the time comes when he wrings her heart !

LIV.

On pins, — the hypocrite ! six months, or so —
An interval of feeling quite ecstatic !
Replete with sonnets full of love and woe, —
In terms, at times, exceedingly erratic ;
Dreading the fearful fiat of her “No” !
While she her female arts, so diplomatic,
Plays off, not valuing the fool a feather,
And in the end rejects him altogether !

LV.

Or if she takes him, after a denial,
Th' experiment is very soon decided ;
Some friend is sure to " sit upon the trial,"
By whom alone the gentle spouse is guided ;
A sort of moral and domestic dial,
That shows how love and time should be divided !
A monitor still faithful to her duty,
A miscreant ! bent on mischief — 't is her booty.

LVI.

The lady, being jealous of her love,
Or of her dignity, consults her friend,
Who, zealous her fidelity to prove,
Is cautious, always, never to *defend* ;
Doubts and surmises into snares are wove,
To compass, for the most part, some base end ;
And thus between them they contrive to fashion,
Into proofs of guilt, th' effects of pride, or passion.

LVII.

The sex are so extremely sensitive,
'T is difficult to deal with them at best ;

And then their pride exceeds all things that live !
And is the foe at once to love and rest ;
It shocks the mind to see such creatures grieve !
And when we wound them — let it be confest —
'Tis from some vicious quality of blood,
And not that we deliberately could.

LVIII.

A noble mind will anxiously repair,
(Provided *she* allows it) any ill,
A moment's pang, the slightest doubt, or fear,
Invading breasts we're bound to cherish still !
A delicate task, no doubt, requiring care,
Yet all who *really* love possess the skill ;
But then — aye, there's the rub, Sir ! she wo'n't let you,
When once her mind is bent to tease and fret you !

LIX.

Which is the case, nine cases out of ten,
Where confidantes and mothers interpose ;
Who fancy they've a right to govern men,
The first from pique ; the other — God only knows

What prompts her, save the pleasure of giving pain !
Mov'd by a feeling that no longer glows,
She soon essays to make her daughter chilly,
Who, thinking *her* wise, chooses to be silly.

LX.

They do not know (the fact is, they don't care)
The mental anguish their vile arts occasion ;
With rocky bosoms, strangers to a tear, —
How *should* they feel, when thus they plan th' invasion
Of tenderness ! and seek to banish there
An object which, in spite of false persuasion,
The heart — that never yet itself deceiv'd —
Still cherishes — devotedly, though griev'd !

LXI.

Alas, the broken image multiplies,
In ev'ry shatter'd fragment still the same !
And thy pale spectres, Memory ! arise,
To wrap the heart in unconsuming flame !
Nurs'd by a source from which in vain it flies —
The thought that we must share with them the blame

Of having robb'd the Being we lov'd of rest,
And planted thorns within a human breast !

LXII.

And what remains ? Can either love again ?
Ah, no ! regret, remorse, pride — all forbid !
The portion that remains to us of pain,
Is treasur'd up — strange instinct ! and still hid
By the very knowledge that we've liv'd in vain !
The Good have sorrow'd, and the Wise have chid,
But neither prayer nor precept can restore
To the bruise'd heart the health it knew before.

LXIII.

An “innocent flirtation” being the ‘mode,’
His “parts, his title, and his perfect soul,”
Oscar embark'd with one who danc'd, sung, rode,
“Divinely” ! being, in fact, upon the whole,
Without a rival in that bright abode
Of Beauty's daughters ! where the soft control
Of wedded love imparts a charm unknown
To Dian, girded in her icy zone !³

LXIV.

In one respect his choice was a bad one,
It touch'd a friend, whose honor was his life ;
And so the issue prov'd a very sad one !
Not that it implicated either wife —
For Oscar, they all took for granted, had one ;
Though, as to that, so had the “ Thane of Fife ” ! *
Ambition led the one, and love the other,
To the same purple goal — each slew a brother !

LXV.

O London — but I hate apostrophes
To brick and mortar merely — London, then —
Though Wordsworth, in a certain song of his,
Sings of its “ mighty heart,” — is but a den,
Like ev'ry other such place upon this
Dark earth and erring, of *not* painted men ; †

* The Thane of Fife *had* a wife. — *Macbeth*.

† La Harpe, in his “ Course of Literature,” speaks of the intellectual “ Barbarians ” of the eighteenth century. The man of society, in his social relations, is pretty much the same savage — that is, he has all the vices, with few, or none, of the higher virtues that elevate the untutored character of his Red brother — in every instance, at least, where the latter has been fortunate enough to escape his fraternal hug !

Rousseau, and he, the Sage of Monticello,*
Esteemed the Savage much the nobler fellow !

LXVI.

And know I not his native manliness,
His stern integrity of soul — the faith
That sooner perishes than work out less
Than it is pledged to, and his scorn of death ?
A list of lofty virtues, I confess,
Might make the paltry “ Pale face ” hold his breath ;
Nor longer prate of bootless schools and colleges,
His “ fierce democracies,” and worse doxologies.

LXVII.

London, awaking from its sleep of years,†
(All minor cases being mere interludes,)
Swoop'd down on Oscar with a wrath that sears
Excessively — so seldom it intrudes ;

* Thomas Jefferson.

† Once in seven years,” says Macaulay, “ our virtue becomes outrageous. At length our anger is satiated. Our victim is ruined, and his heart broken. And our virtue goes quietly to sleep for the next seven years.”— *Essays* : vol. 1, p. 334.

Mothers turn'd pale, and daughters were in tears !
(For self-love figures largely in such feuds ;)
When luckily a "Challenge" came, in time
To save the parties from lampoons in rhyme.

LXVIII.

Now Inez, to whom such things were quite new,
Scarce comprehended Oscar's dereliction ;
She had been spending a few weeks at Kew,
Where nature sports her in the garb of fiction,
(The latter very often spoils the true !)
And little had foreseen the great affliction
That now awaited her ; but Youth's elastic,
And outlives shocks at times extremely drastic !

LXIX.

O not that human feeling, like the grass
Which grows beneath th' ascending Pyramid !*
Hath power to renew itself — alas,
Even as the ashes there, for ages hid

* The "great Pyramid" is as much entitled to an *Oasis*, as was the Temple of Jupiter Ammon.

Consum'd — as shall that perishable mass
Of worldly grandeur be, — it is forbid !
And like the fires of some volcanic isle,
It lights the flames of its own funeral pile !

LXX.

The knowledge that affection hath surviv'd
The worth of that it lov'd, and loves — for still
The heart, though deeply wounded, worn, and griev'd,
Though it recoil from the conviction, will,
Even from the fulness of its sense bereav'd !
Seek to extract some solace out of ill ;
And clings — not to the thought of what we are, —
But to the memory of what we were !

LXXI.

That lonely feeling that survives, when those
It loves are chang'd, and never can regain
The height from which they fell ! with hopes that rose
Only to set in darkness and in pain, —
Is as the solitary flower that blows
And blooms above the dead — it is in vain !

It only adds a keener edge to woe,
It only tells us all is dust below !

LXXII.

Thus Sorrow leaves us standing on the shore,
To see our last sail shiver'd ! and the wave,
From the dark womb of waters, closing o'er
The founder'd vessel we had hop'd to save !
We watch for those who can return no more,
And Memory lights her vigil at the grave !
A heavy thought, that saddens the long day,
And lives, when all things else have past away !

LXXIII.

Though somewhat early, better 'tis to die,
Than bear a discontent about the heart,
Perhaps a grief ! that would suppress the sigh,
And finds suppression but the bitterer part ;
To watch the dear illusions as they fly !
Till life becomes a cold and cheerless mart ;
The past has perish'd ! and we feel no more
The beacon burns to light us to that shore !

LXXIV.

Imprest with a presentiment of sorrow,
Inez determin'd to regain the city ;
And so she started on the very morrow,
And carol'd, as she went, a plaintive ditty,
As if from song some solace she could borrow ;
She was, in sooth, fit subject for sad pity !
But check'd her sighs, as, gather'd in each trace,
The Past return'd upon her with that face !

LXXV.

And Oscar met her in the silvery night,
Gliding with airy mantle round her thrown ;
With noiseless step, and glance more wildly bright
Than the immortal radiance that shone
Upon her from above !—earth has no light
Like woman's eye, no music like her tone !
In youth we think so, when dispos'd to flirt—we
Are apt to change our sentiments at Thirty !

LXXVI.

With trembling hand, and lip that quiver'd still,
She tried to eat the small wing of a bird ;

Then sipp'd some chocolate, that, like a rill,
Went gurgling down her sweet throat, scarcely heard !
The effort independent of her will
Appear'd, and statue-like she sat, nor stirr'd ;
Her manner puzzl'd you — it was not vanity,
'Twas something deeper — 'twas *true* love's insanity !

LXXVII.

It had been settl'd that the combatants
Should cross the Channel on their deadly mission !
Which thus assum'd an air of stern romance,
Especially in men of their condition ;
Whether they went to Flanders or to France,
Was kept a secret, to avert suspicion ;
So, leaving London by a western route,
Oscar and Inez fairly had set out !

LXXVIII.

The Lovers saw St. Paul's behind them fade,
And Piccadilly brighten up before !
They sigh'd adieu to Burlington Arcade,
The old Abbey rear'd its towers high and hoar ;

While on the left lay Hyde Park's gay parade,
With Wellington in bronze, who fights no more !
They quitted Kensington, its walks and Palace —
Adieu to England !—sets the wind for Calais ?

LXXIX.

A mingl'd feeling, something like regret !
Stirs in the heart when thus we're borne away
Forever from a spot of earth, where yet
Sorrow, perchance, had sadden'd each dull day ;
That very feeling dares us to forget !
And when, at length, the time arrives to say
“Farewell” !—the tongue will falter, as when we
Renounce an old friend, turn'd new enemy !

LXXX.

The Bois de Boulogne, the Hyde Park of France —
But wanting thy grand Gardens, Kensington !
O Kensington — how thoughts at times entrance !
To leave us, in the end, where we begun —
What ? Life, or a dream ! no matter, they enhance
The recollections of the course we run ;

And, whether joy or grief usurp the mind,
These mental musings leave their trace behind !

LXXXI.

“ Those thoughts that wander through Eternity,”
Unbidden still, transport us to the past,
When it had been a happiness to die !
Had we been school'd to dread the worst and last
Of evils that still prompt the hourly sigh,
When all subsides ! and life itself seems cast
A weather-beaten wreck upon the shore,
Lash'd by the sea that it shall sail no more !

LXXXII.

The Bois de Boulogne was the place appointed,
Where five next morning was to see them pitted,
Like game cocks, clipt and close—ay, and well jointed !
The spot selected was extremely fitted
For such rencounters ; Chevaliers, anointed
With the true unction—men who never quitted
Their guard, or hold, and scorn'd pacification,
Had grac'd that rendezvous of the French nation.

. LXXXIII.

All those who think, know thought is busiest, when —
The time and place arrang'd, — we sit us down,
And feel like victims singl'd out from men,
Held up as moral beacons to the town !
With curious eyes surveying us, as then
They look'd on monsters whom they dar'd not own !
The shrug, the whisper, with — “The Captain's got
His match, at last — the Major's a *dead* shot !”

LXXXIV.

Oscar's immediate “Second,” was a man
Of grave demeanor, and some forty years ;
Dark skin, and darker eyes, that seem'd to scan
And read you through ! — calm, and above all fears,
(A stouter heart ne'er led Napoleon's van !)
He had a direct manner, such as wears
Well with the brave ; his words were few, but ne'er
Fell light or unregarded on the ear.

LXXXV.

In youth, — ere time had temper'd his warm blood, —
His sword had sever'd several threads of life ;

And it was said (and I believe on good
Authority) that in that early strife
Fell one whom, but few hours before, he would
Himself have died to save ! A pretty wife
Had been the unoffending cause of feud,
And the imagin'd stain demanded blood ! *

LXXXVI.

And then, by way of moral retribution,
A goodly fortune, honorably earn'd,
Exhausted in an elegant profusion,
He could no more command—the tide was turn'd,
And ebb'd away his friends ! What's the solution ?
A very simple one, as all have learn'd,
Who, as the lawyers say, have “tried the question,”
Whether a prison aids or checks digestion !

LXXXVII.

The somewhat singular coincidence
Was mark'd by all, and should have been averted ;

* I knew well the party here described, and the above representation is literally true. From the hour of that fatal meeting, he appeared, indeed, to “live a man forbid” !

For such things should be govern'd by a sense
Exceedingly fastidious, 'tis asserted ;
Whatever furnishes the least pretence
For comment, or surmise, should be deserted ;
The practice, when 'tis plac'd in right condition,
Like Cæsar's wife, should be above suspicion !

LXXXVIII.

The parties took their ground at seven paces,
A snap, or flash, to be esteem'd a shot ;
The "Code," it doubtless will be said, embraces
No such arrangement — let us ask, why not ?
A pistol's surer than the hand it graces,
And may *not* snap — a flash may seal our lot !
And so it turn'd out, as all such things may,
With one of the Bellig'rants in this fray.

LXXXIX.

The husband fell ! — a martyr to his folly, —
And so should foolish wives and husbands fall !
But from that hour a settl'd melancholy
Descended on the victor, as a pall !

Shrouding the man in mystic musings wholly ;
Life seem'd to wither from him as a scroll !
The flash that wing'd the bullet through his friend,
Appear'd to blast his being's aim and end !

XC.

Still, Paris, with its Tuilleries and Louvre,
Might yet restore him to a pristine health ;
And his sweet Inez !— Few things seem'd to move her
In that Mosaic grand of Woe and Wealth !
But her perceptions were all right, and prove her
Athenian blood ! She saw Crime move in stealth ;
The infant Hercules of social error,
Had not yet quite matur'd his “ Reign of Terror” !

XCI.

But traces of his awful steps were there !
The aspect of the city, the whole clime,
Bore marks of force, suspicion, fraud, and fear !
The color and the character of crime
Seem'd as imprest upon the very air,
And France grew pale at the disjointed time !*

* The time is out of joint. — MACBETH.

On ev'ry column, with suspended breath,
You read the words, "Equality or Death!"

XCII.

'T was at this crisis that the wild "Decree,"
Abolishing, by law, a "Future State,"
Was known through France — this was "Philosophy"!
A word which then had power to awe the Great;
The very watch-word of French 'Liberty' —
Freedom miscall'd — unknown, or known too late!
O France! thy mad career of Gain,* or Glory,
Hath left thee but a doubtful page in story!

XCIII.

Old Brunswick's "Manifesto," and Pilnitz,
Taught her to hope no mercy from her foes;
And England's War-steeds 'gan to champ their bits,
Because her neighbors chose to come to blows, —
A crafty system, worthy of the Pitts!
Beyond subsistence means the mass still grows,

* Perhaps I should have written "Grain" — which was very much in demand at the time.

And thus, to save the populace from famine,
They're sent to fight the Turk, and teach the Brahmin!

XCIV.

The Anti-Austrian influence of that day,
Transmitted by Du Barry, and the Court,—
Prov'd ultimately fatal, as they say,
To the poor Queen! who had, in sooth, a sort
Of terror and presentiment that lay
Heavy at heart—why did she not retort?
Too much the “Saint,” had Louis couch'd the lance,*
He had redeem'd his Bride, and rescu'd France!

XCV.

In ev'ry Churchyard, here and there, a tree
Was planted, shadowing the form of “Sleep,”
That knew no dawn—a blank Eternity!
There it stood pointing to the Tombs, where deep
The ashes slept of those who ne'er should see
The light again! a thing might make one weep—

* To arms! cried Mortimer, and couch'd his quiv'ring
lance.—GRAY.

But that we've grounds for hope in our Avatar,
Transcending the Convention's "Imprimatur"!

XCVI.

Oscar had luckily a friend in town,
Beneath whose roof he shelter'd him a space ;
A brave old Briton, whom he long had known,—
Herville his name, the last of a proud race ;
A man too, in his day, of some renown ;
Who seem'd as if he struggl'd to efface
Some vestiges that linger'd from the Past—
Where Memory sat a Spectre 'mid a waste !

XCVII.

She haunts us in our hours of age and death,*
A guest that shakes the temple of the Mind !

* Certainly in some of its forms. Madame de Staël, speaking of a death-bed (it was her own) says, that "our ideas are confused."

In death by drowning, however, (not that I speak from *personal experience*, although I have been a great deal at sea) and by other casualties, it is often the reverse—as Shakspeare was aware when he wrote his famous description of the "dream," in Richard III.

Or the dread Siroc, that, with scorching breath,
Doth leave it staggering, and scath'd, and blind !
For, like all other creditors beneath
The sun, whom we may meet with, we shall find
That " wracking Steward, Remembrance,"* closest
 clings
To those who least can pay their reckonings !

XCVIII.

The finest minds, like metals, or a kiss,
Dissolve the easiest ; † and stand no chance
Of getting on in such a world as this,
Made up of fools and rogues, who " shave " and dance !
Whilst few things will be found to come amiss
To him whose brain's untinctur'd by romance ;
Give him but competence, his spouse and glass,
He'll " daff the world aside, and bid it pass."

XCIX.

Or if his feelings, once in seven years,
Prevail upon themselves to take an airing,

* A phrase of Sir Philip Sidney's.

† Pope somewhere says something to the same effect.

Seek they the kindred board of him whose cares
A soul supreme, perchance, is downward bearing?
Does nature's voice arrest his dull, cold ears?
He goes upon a mission of "cheese-paring"!
To save a brother? No — to squeeze his Broker —
His daughter must be taught to dance the Polka!

C.

Yet, after all, money's the only "Good,"
In this low world of lucre and its lust;
The Frenchman's bitter "Maxim" still hath stood
Its ground, in spite of shame, and always must, —
For men can be no better if they would;
Each learns, in time, the other to distrust,
And finds, of all the things within his range,
The only thing immutable, is "Change"!

END OF CANTO I.

NOTES TO CANTO I.

NOTE 1. Page 17.

Like the dread words that shook th' Assyrian's soul !

I HAVE tried the two extremes of social life,—the cultivated city, and the unchartered wilderness,—and, after an ample experience of the two, I have no hesitation in deciding in favor of the latter. In the one, perpetually perked up in the strait-jacket of conventional forms, and as perpetually treading upon the sharp points of angry and conflicting passions, man becomes as artificial in his feelings as his wants. In the other, clad in a loose and flowing robe, he finds himself moving with step as light as the air he breathes, and firm as the unfettered earth on which he walks. There is, too, a *heartiness* in the one sphere, the want of which is far from being atoned for by what are supposed to be the comforts and elegancies that belong to the other.

In the former, in short, our ideas, as to the “fitness of things,” are always upon a scale corresponding with that vastness of domain, which, in a land of stream and prairie, is so well calculated to impart elasticity to the feelings, and elevation to the thoughts of those, who, in the fulness of health, and with the spring of Hope as yet unbroken in their bosoms, go on their way rejoicing, like the strong man in his strength.

NOTE 2. Page 36.

As serv'd to show the Statesman in the Fool !

It is a little remarkable, that the most eloquent, perhaps the only really eloquent speaker, since the days of Chatham, should have been almost an uneducated and self-taught man. The "forest-born Demosthenes," Patrick Henry, comes more fully up to the standard of the great orators of Antiquity, than any other name (unless we except Mirabeau) of which our modern annals can boast. True, he arose amidst the strife of great elements—yet those elements seem to have roused but one master-spirit, capable of wielding the thunders, and directing the lightnings of forensic eloquence. There were, in those "times that tried men's souls," other minds of equal moral grandeur, and probably more capacious ; but the *suadæ medulla* of the poet,—the quintessence of *persuasion*,—seems to have been preëminently the gift of Patrick Henry. John Randolph, had he studied better models in oratory, and cultivated a better forensic taste, might have transmitted to posterity something more than the shadow of a name—which is all (leaving out the "magni") that he has bequeathed to us. "The midnight bell does not toll for fire in Richmond," said he, "but the mother presses her infant closer to her breast"—a fine sentence, of which the "curious felicity" forms the striking and strong merit. Such sentences abound in the ancient classics, terse and nervous ; and contrast, in this respect, with what may be termed the highly expletive character of our modern oratory,—a few names of severe masters excepted. Setting aside the sublime, the

wonderful, in eloquence, there is, perhaps, no speaker, of the present day, who can fairly be adduced as a master of the tender and pathetic, — with power

“To tune his lips to that soft rhetoric,
Which steals upon the ear, and melts to pity
The heart of the stern judge.”

It must be owned, I think, that too many of our public men, of both hemispheres, seem to have embraced the opinion of “Mephistophiles,” in the play, that “where ideas are wanting, words come on purpose to supply their place.” There is, assuredly, nothing of the *mens divinator*, the *impetus sacer*, — the *immensum, infinitumque*, of Cicero, — in our modern oratory. Our great men — really and truly such — seem to have passed away with the occasions that produced them. No matter how stirring the theme, should a speaker of the present day venture to touch those loftier chords that vibrate in “quick bosoms,” the cry of “Moderation” (like that of “Treason,” in the Virginia Assembly, when Henry introduced his famous revolutionary “Resolutions”) would most probably be heard from the lips of his *practical* hearers (with the Utilitarians everything that is not trite, is impractical) in this age of Steam, when the object seems to be to render mental operations as cheap, speedy, and facile, as are those of our thirty-mile-an-hour railroads.

These *modérés* might do well to bear in mind the reply of the Frenchman to his friend, who, recommending to him, on some occasion shortly after their first Revolution, to use “more moderation,” received, in reply, the following: — “On parle tant de la modération ; ma foi, Monsieur ! on n’a pas pris la Bastille avec de la limonade.”

NOTE 3. Page 42.

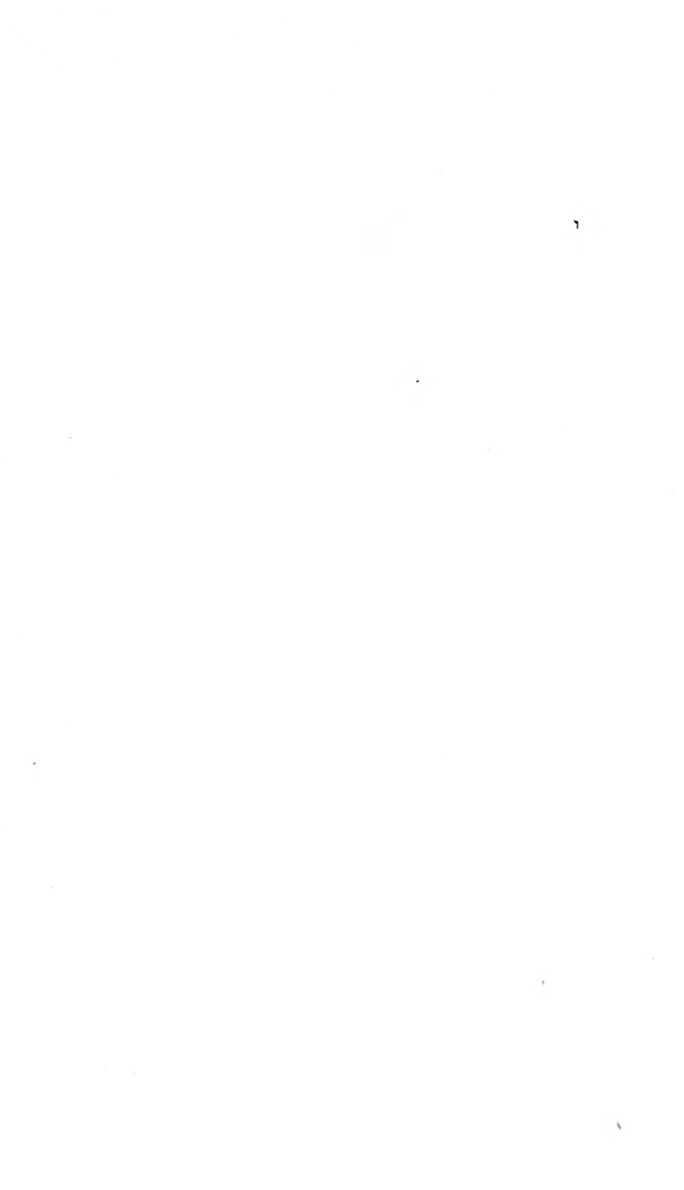
To Dian, girded in her icy zone !

How few young ladies understand the *art* of pleasing ! Like wax figures, or that “frozen music,” to which architecture has been likened (a comparison ascribed to Madame de Staël) they, in general, address themselves exclusively to the eye—forgetting that, whether in the drawing-room, or the parlor, *manner* is of more importance than *matter*—by which I mean mere physical advantages. A very expert dandy, whom I once knew, was wont to say—in speaking of what are called “fine persons,” (not being an Apollo himself) “Figure is nothing—*attitude* is all” ! Now, in the case of all *young* ladies, personal charms, however charming, like the “figure” of my friend, are, comparatively, nothing—*manner*, like his “*attitude*, is all.” The daughter of Necker, by means of this “*manner*” (for she was without beauty) threw her celestial friend, Madame Recamier, in the shade. It was *manner*, and not her great talents, that did it. Ease is necessary to *manner*, which is the reason why so few young ladies possess the latter—as it is impossible to be at one’s ease, where the attention is engrossed with appearances. Plain women are usually agreeable, because they cultivate *manner*, in the absence of personal charms. Another false idea is, that young ladies should never “*come out*” in conversation—that, like children, they are to be seen, not heard. These are the results of a want of true refinement. For all such, Paris is the best school.

THE GREEK GIRL.



CANTO II.



THE GREEK GIRL.


CANTO II.

I.

THE womb of Glory, and alike the grave,
O France, thy sun went down upon his tomb !*
First in the field, the idol of the Brave,
Reluctant justice ratified his doom !
Who came, in evil hour, to curse, not save
Thy people from convulsion's guilt and gloom ;
The ghosts of slaughter'd millions mark'd his state,
And shriek'd — “ The desolator desolate ! ”

* Napoleon. The “sun” referred to, is that of military, not moral glory.

II.

And she, the early partner of  throne,
Whose virtues lent a ray to pierce its gloom,
How amply Fate aveng'd her — groan for groan !
The purple tyrant in his sea-girt tomb,
Had felt her bitter exile made his own ;
She shar'd his diadem, and he her doom ;
Fore-shadow'd, — when, in hour of unmixt evil,
An Angel link'd her fortunes with a Devil !¹

III.

Celestial genius, faculties akin
To inspiration — and the field how vast !
The “ heroes of Humanity ”* had been
Triumphant over error in this last
Great argument ! and Washington — serene
In glory † — had beheld the mighty past, —

* “ Nations,” said Mirabeau, “ should mourn none but their benefactors ; and regret no others but the heroes of humanity.”

† If, in the annals of human greatness, there be one character more luminous than another — lending its mingled

Bequeath'd as Freedom's latest legacy,—
Renew'd again, Napoleon, in thee !

IV.

Such might have been the picture ! but thou didst
Prefer that guilty eminence that made
The name of tyrant hated in the midst
Of tyranny—then wither'd in the shade !
Imperial Suicide ! who madly hid'st
The light which nature gave thee, to degrade
Her image, when thou play'dst the murderer's part,
And struck the guiltless Bourbon to the heart !*

lights of genius, valor, and a lofty patriotism, to a nation's history, and throwing into the shade, from its "excessive bright," the lesser luminaries that from time to time have set their watch in the political firmament of ages, it is that of Washington. But what pen can hope to do justice to it ? Envy grows pale as it contemplates that character ; and Virtue feels that it were superfluous to offer to it the incense of its praise. View it under what aspect we may, its surpassing moral grandeur overpowers the mind, and awes it into reverential wonder ! Vir magnanime ! Vir fortissime ! Junior Brute !

* Execution of the Duke d'Enghein.

V.

How different his, the great Samaritan
Of human rights ! who came to save, not slay ;
How flam'd his sword Seraphic in the van
Where Freedom's Goddess bent her radiant way,
The just made perfect in one matchless Man !
But the great theme hath led my Muse astray,
A native of these gardens of his glory —
But this and these are foreign from my story :—

VI.

Herville, the drop of nature from his eye
Had brush'd away, half sorrow, and half joy ;
With step still firm, a mien and manner high,
He almost deem'd himself again a boy !
He spoke of England, and repress a sigh !
Something the recollection seem'd t' alloy ;
And with a smile, unfitting where seen most,
He chang'd the subject, as became the Host.

VII.

But he had scarce time to advert to France,
Ere violence and uproar had ensued !

It somewhat startl'd them to see advance
Arm'd Ruffians, whose manner menac'd blood !
Herville inferr'd their business at a glance ;
Oscar the hint took, and prepar'd for feud —
“Seal'd Orders” ! be my answer in my sword.
And the men took the Noble at his word.

VIII.

Shiver'd its blade, his pistol next he graspt —
The sharp shot clatt'ring splinter'd one man's thigh ;
Another deem'd his prey safe as he claspt
Mute Inez — Oscar fell'd him instantly !
The old Briton fought till for breath he gasp'd !
Determin'd like a man, at least, to die ; —
“Seize the Aristocrats ! nor let them pass —
Summon a coach — I'll answer for the Lass.”

IX.

Through gloomy chambers to a cell remote
Oscar was dragg'd — when, opening a door,
Whose rusty hinges, sharp and grating, smote
Upon his ear, without ceremony more,

He was thrust in—the bolt shut sharply as a shot,
And twang'd again! which prov'd it was secure;
He heard their lone and echoing steps depart,
Which seem'd the knell of Hope unto his heart!

X.

A somewhat sudden and quite harsh transition
To Oscar prov'd this strange incarceration!
He relish'd by no means his forc'd condition;
But the “New Order” had upset the Nation,
And blood, like water, shed without contrition;
Despairing of his Throne, and head's salvation,
Louis for Austria had quitted France,
A flight by some thought not th' effect of chance.*

XI.

Amazement sat upon his silent soul,
Left thus at once to solitude and thought!

* Planned, most probably, by Lafayette, whose abortive efforts at averting an unjust doom from the most interesting Royal group on the historic canvass, appear to have been the result of a “Decree.”

His fears for Inez lost him all control —
He felt his senses whirl ! — his brain was wrought
Almost to phrenzy's pitch ! when, to console
His heart and head, all suddenly was brought
A flood of gushing tears, that gave relief
To his o'erclouded senses, steep'd in grief.

XII.

The airy webs of spiders vail'd the roof,
That hung above him like a horrid tomb !
Strange sights were trac'd along the wall — sad proof
That other victims there had met their doom !
The characters were such as from the woof
Of minds disorder'd sprung, we may presume ;
Despair and Madness various figures drew,
Whilst Love the cherish'd name still trac'd in view !

XIII.

A wooden stool, and table made of stone,
A model Guillotine and desk, were all
The furniture contain'd within that lone
And damp apartment, somewhat deep, though small ;

The desk was quite superfluous to one
Depriv'd of ink and paper ! and to call
Would but have wak'd an echo long and loud,
To startle Silence from his dreamy shroud !

XIV.

A blear-ey'd and bloodthirsty-looking devil
Now enter'd, bringing in a jug of water ;
Stifling his rage, and trying to seem civil,
Oscar enquir'd of Inez — " The Lord's daughter ? "
" The same," said Oscar — " Where she can't work
evil !
Don't be concern'd, you 'll all be brought to slaughter,"
(And here he gnash'd his teeth, and clench'd his fist,)
" So soon as they have got through with the List."

XV.

" The list !—to slaughter !—why, what is 't ye mean ? "
" Ask me no questions — you may learn to-morrow."
Turning the key, the wretch was gone : His lean
Figure and words struck Oscar dumb with horror !

He scarce believ'd what he had heard and seen,
And mute amazement left no room for sorrow ;
“ Imprison'd thus, and threaten'd here with death ” —
Chok'd by the words, he almost gasp'd for breath !

XVI.

His limbs being free (the Jacobins relied
Less upon chains, than on their bolts and bars) —
Oscar approach'd his iron grate, and spied
A man whose face appear'd enseam'd with scars,
His forehead in a crimson 'kerchief tied, —
(No honorable wounds, obtain'd in wars !)
Who at a window stood, some three feet thick,
Just opposite — a prison made of brick.

XVII.

The man made signs to him, though all unknown
Their character, — which Oscar took amiss ;
And so he question'd him, in turn, in tone
So loud, as to arrest the ears of his
Infernal Keeper ! who, as wolves are prone
To seize their prey, rush'd on him — “ What is this ? ”

His hand grasp'd Oscar's throat, with fiendish frown,—
“ Hold off ! ” said Oscar, and he knock'd him down

XVIII.

The scuffle made some noise — the rascal yell'd
Like beaten hound, when lapping the stag's blood ;
His wrath was soon appeas'd, and fears dispell'd,
And Oscar now repented of his mood,
His passion, in its turn, as quickly quell'd ;
The fellow had his creatures — some six good
And sturdy rogues now came to his relief —
Butchers by trade were four, the sixth a thief !

XIX.

With very little ceremony seiz'd
They now got Oscar down upon the floor,
And tightly o'er his wrists the cords they squeez'd ,
Two limbs were not enough, they bound the four —
The last with rivets, which, had they been greas'd,
Had left his limbs, perhaps, not quite so sore ;
Thus manacl'd they dragg'd him to some straw.
Half dead with pain and passion, as they saw.

XX.

And so they left him, to attend the "New
Comers," as they are call'd, or "New Arriv'd" —
As Pollok, prais'd in many a Review,
For writing nonsense — styles one who contriv'd
To mount above the seventh Heaven's blue!
A height beyond the Bard's flight, had he liv'd;
Obnoxious, rather, to Minerva's curse,
A fanatic more flagrant than his verse!

XXI.

High o'er the waters of the purple Seine,
And girted by a verdant terrace round,
A gloomy mansion rose — fit haunt of men
Who seem to have risen from the deep profound
Of Milton's ruin'd Angels! — once the den
Of him whose name struck terror in the sound,
That echo'd death! — the mighty Mountaineer,
The secret, bloody, well dress'd Robespierre!*

* This amiable Attorney went about his butcheries in the streets of Paris, dressed, says the historian, "in a rose-color'd silk vest, and a coat of the softest blue!"

XXII.

His fatal footsteps trod its halls no more,
Another presence fill'd them — Pleasure threw
Its light o'er scenes where darkness dwelt of yore,
And other sights and sounds now met the view ;
Love's votaries bow'd where victims knelt before !
And all bespoke the reign of things call'd " New ;"
Such was the mansion, in that guilty day,
Where dwelt th' Inspector of Police, Marais !

XXIII.

Sofas of silk, all fring'd with gold, to suit
The drapery of the walls, around were set ;
With various instruments of sound — the lute,
The deep-ton'd harp, and softest flagelet ;
Terror had touch'd the chords, and they were mute !
Death-like, as her whose marble eyes they met,
And fix'd as with the power of a spell —
A sound had seem'd unto her heart a knell !

XXIV.

And pale and motionless sat Inez there !
Untempted by the tempting fruits and ices,

Liqueurs, and other very dainty fare,
Design'd to serve his devilish devices,
Who, doubtless, would be ready to appear,
In proper person, at the proper crisis ;
With soft, quick step, Marais now enter'd in,
As enter'd in the sinless garden, Sin !*

XXV.

A crimson tint an instant ting'd her cheek,
As, slowly rising from the couch, she stood
Cold as the marble of her matchless Greek,
As ice were in her veins, instead of blood !
With lip comprest, she made her manner speak,
Immortal in her air and attitude !
Th' Inspector paus'd a moment, to survey
His victim, and then said, — “ You see Marais !

XXVI.

Inspector of Police, and Prisons, too ;
You are in Paris, Madame, where the block

* The sinless garden is here intended to be represented in the person of the innocent Inez.

And axe, are call'd the Guillotine. Have you
Yet heard the name ? ” A momentary shock
Pass'd o'er her form and features — but she drew
Her figure to its height, firm as the rock !
And, without falt'ring, she replied, — “ What then ?
I am, at least, in the abode of men ? ”

XXVII.

“ You live, too, Madame, in the age of ‘ Reason ’ —
Their Chivalry we leave to other lands ;
Women have prov'd the frequent source of treason,
And govern men, — their hearts, if not their hands,*
An evil that should be redress'd in season ;
To upper air appealing, there She stands ! ” †
He said, and — pointing to an unveil'd figure, —
Drew forth a pistol, prim'd, and set the trigger !

* The Prefect seems to have borrowed the opinion of Lord Kaimes, who, somewhere in the second volume of his “ Sketches,” says : — “ Women have less patriotism than men ; and less bitterness against the enemies of their country.” The absence of “ bitterness,” however, may not be incompatible with the purest patriotism.

† Statue of the “ Goddess of Liberty.”

XXVIII.

Inez here sought the window, scarcely knowing
The thing she did, nor uttering a word ;
The voice of a great multitude was blowing
A perfect hurricane, the stones that stirr'd !
The truth flash'd on her ! and, one look bestowing,
She clos'd her eyes, but not her ears — which heard
The trembling rattle of the axe, and then
The instant stroke — which seem'd to say, ' Amen !'

XXIX.

" Herville has paid his debt to the Convention,
If not to nature," coolly said Marais.
Inez, who had been sinking, at the mention
Of Oscar's friend, compos'd her late dismay,
And summon'd all her soul in one last tension
Of nerves that seem'd as fitted then to slay !
As, with a smile, she said, — though full of wo —
" Pray tell me, do you treat the *women* so ? "

XXX.

The question touch'd him just as she intended,
She saw it, and then added, — " There is one,

Quite young, I could have wish'd to have befriended —
Is *he* still living ? ” “ Ay, Madame, where none
Can save him — his last day is nearly ended ;
To-morrow sees the set of his last sun !
When this small key unlocks his cell again,
His name is stricken from the roll of men ! ”

XXXI.

“ We have a Mother. I should like to bear
An only son's last words to her.” Marais
Sought vainly to suppress the Demon's leer,
As, taking her soft hand, as if in play,
He said, or, rather, whisper'd in her ear, —
“ That boon 't is mine to grant, if you will pay,
Freely, the price I ask for it — 't is this, —
The purchase of his freedom in a kiss ! ”

XXXII.

“ Nay, soft ! our compact's scarcely yet begun —
His freedom ? ” “ Ay.” “ A thousand such are yours !
Only first tell me how may this be done ? ”
“ I hold the keys of all the Corridors.”

“ And *that* unlocks his cell ? ” “ That is the one.”
“ But how do you approach the outer doors ?
How from the yard ? ” — Deeming he’d won the goal,
Marais proceeded to explain the whole.

XXXIII.

“ A passport will be needed — it is here.
Thus the first coach conducts you from this slough
Of Horror, that infests the very air !
But, mark ! the Commune’s records bear my vow
Of fealty, seal’d in blood, to Robespierre !
My name must then—you understand ?—And *now* ” —
Rapid as light, than the swift wind more fleet,
A Persian dagger laid him at her feet !

XXXIV.

To seize the keys — the passport — and assume
The garb of that base tool of baser men ;
To fly the dread infection of that room,
That hung above her like a frightful den !
And issue forth into the midnight gloom,
Were but the work of one brief instant — when,

●

Love on her lip, and triumph in her eye,
She stood by Oscar, like a Mystery !

XXXV.

“ Inez ! ” — that dear name started to his lips,
Intense and burning ! — From his waken’d brain
Pass’d suddenly away the dim eclipse
Of its despair, and Rapture broke his chain !
Forgotten was the hand, hard by, that nips
Love’s opening flowers ! but Inez not in vain
Had perill’d all ! — and, with a woman’s tact,
Made up for much her wond’ring lover lack’d :

XXXVI.

“ Does Herville live ? ” “ Ay, in a better world ! ”
“ Why, Inez, there is blood upon thy hand !
And they have kill’d him ? May black vengeance,
hurl’d
From heaven, heave with throes this guilty land !
And in what nest were thy sweet pinions furl’d,
When borne away by that accursed band !
Have they relented, and thus set thee free ?
But whence this blood ? ” “ Oscar ! ’t was shed for *thee*.

•

XXXVII.

No time is to be lost ! — Nay, quickly — come !”
They reach’d the long, dim gallery, as wan’d
The wond’rous star, themselves as pale and dumb ;
The Keeper deem’d that Oscar was arraign’d
Before the Commune — “ That’s the signal drum,”
He dryly said. The fugitives now gain’d
The outer gate — when Oscar, freed his lair,
Felt the first freshness of th’ unfetter’d air !

XXXVIII.

Pursuing purposely a devious route,
The parties reach’d first Brussels, then the Hague ;
Poor Inez was most thoroughly worn out !
And still appear’d to labor under vague
Presentiments of evil ! caus’d, no doubt,
By what she’d suffer’d from the moral plague
They had escap’d in that infernal city !
Which Wilson should have chosen for his ditty.*

* “ City of the Plague.”

XXXIX.

And yet, — so strong is human vanity, —
Although the tocsin hourly beat to arms
In that Golgotha ! and the midnight cry
Of victims follow'd the day's fierce alarms ;
And Austria saw her fair-hair'd Daughter die,
And such a death ! — still Paris had its charms
For Anne, Maria, Louise, Germaine Necker,
In wit, words, works, an absolute “ Three-Decker ” !

XL.

In a few months the Lovers whirl'd along,
On rapid wheels, upon the self-same road
They had so lately travers'd under strong
Emotion, little lighten'd of its load !
To Inez seem'd renew'd a sense of wrong ;
She fear'd the whirlwind ! since in that abode
The winds were sown ! and on her ear now fell
The name of London, like a midnight bell !

XLI.

It is a most uncomfortable feeling
To be returning where no hearts make home !

To feel, in fact, as if we had been stealing,
On the first glimpse of some familiar dome !
The footstep falters, and the head goes reeling,
As the first face glares on us like a Gnome !
One's friends recede, ingenious in devices,
When one's affairs have reach'd what's call'd a
 “ Crisis ” !

XLII.

Something like this emotion cross'd the brain
Of Oscar, as they rumbled into town ;
He struggl'd to dismiss it, but in vain —
His sun he felt was gone, or going, down !
And could he hope it would emerge again ?
Mankind, he knew, were wont to smile, or frown,
As Fortune doth decree our rise, or fall,—
In that respect the rogues are Courtiers all !

XLIII.

To touch his purse is touching man too nearly,
He shrinks instinctively, and bids you, hold !
All human ties are light, when balanc'd fairly
Against that tendency, in young or old ;

Sheridan earn'd this knowledge somewhat dearly,—
His sky grew cloudy, and his friends grew cold !
For debts and duns are sure to render chilly
The air of Bond street and of Piccadilly.

XLIV.

“Put money in thy purse” ! an empty purse,
At all times sad, is saddest to a Lover !
That fierce pursuit won't always reimburse,
As we experience when the chase is over !
An awkward interval, and sometimes worse ;—
The heart, made wise too late ! will then discover
A Serpent coil'd beneath that soft illusion,
Which leaves us bankrupts — sometimes a contusion !

XLV.

Oscar's estate, (friends he had none,) a name,
Both goodly in their time, were now o'erclouded,
Eclips'd by the dark smoke from that fierce flame !
Wherein the few hopes he had left lay shrouded ;
That never more may reascend the same
Sad eminence, on which in youth they crowded ;

So flowers deck the cold Volcano's brow,
Till scorch'd by the red lava-flood below !

XLVI.

Consum'd in their own flames, the passions freeze,
The ice-plants of the soul ! and with them, too,
In that cold region wither'd, the mind's peace !
A thing not quite so easy to renew, —
For, being the forfeit of a deep disease,²
Although its symptoms may be quell'd, how few, —
Whatever be their skill in learned laws, —
Have wit enough to remedy the *cause*.

XLVII.

The patient, being oblig'd to minister
Unto himself — poor fellow ! has recourse, —
In order that the mind may not recur
Too painfully to subjects of remorse, —
To arguments from which you would infer
Somewhat abated of regret the force ;
Alas ! in spite of each preceptive pill,
The pulse beats high within the temples still !³

XLVIII.

Oscar determin'd London to avoid —
He lov'd the country, — that is, rural life ;
Its breezy woods and waters never cloy'd,
But, like a gentle, young, and blooming wife,
Are a perpetual pleasure unalloy'd,
Upon whose bosom we repose from strife ;
A voice like music floats o'er yonder hill,
And whispers to the passions, " Peace ! be still."

XLIX.

Inez herself was like a vesper hymn,
Borne by the breeze along sequester'd vale ;
When rous'd, she had a deal of what's call'd "*rim*."
As I have shown already in this tale ;
But she began to droop — her eye grew dim,
And her fair cheek became as marble pale ;
Some unseen canker was at work within —
Her very love appear'd to her a sin !

L.

They went to Bath, and, finally, to Brighton,
Drank of its waters, and inhal'd its air ;

But too much company appear'd to heighten
What took the semblance of a fix'd despair !
The slightest things would agitate and frighten
A frame whose first shock had been given by fear !
And the unseated mind now seem'd to borrow
Involuntary images from Horror !

LI.

The place was manifestly one not fitted,
In any view of it, to mitigate
A malady that rarely intermitted,
And had reduced her at a rapid rate ;
So speedily its sea-girt walks they quitted ;
But, ah, vain change — “ who can control his fate ! ”
A viewless hand those delicate strings had swept,
And all was discord ! — Oscar saw, and wept !

LII.

Time, and the solace of repose, it may be,
Would overthrow the things that had o'erthrown her ;
So they betook them to a distant Abbey,
On special summons of its wealthy owner ;

In its exterior though somewhat shabby,
Magnificent within ; and there, if shown her
That gentleness which turneth away wrath,
Health might again walk with her in her path.

LIII.

A verdant lawn embrac'd the Abbey round,⁴
And was its base ; descending you survey,
Fronting an esplanade, or lower ground,
The vaulted domes of grottoes, that display
Art's decorations, from the grave profound
Of her inspir'd efforts, to the gay !
The magic of Mosaic, plants marine,
And all of rich and beautiful, I ween.

LIV.

But vaguely wandering from walk to walk,
Inez appear'd to live in her own world !
Sometimes with airy shapes she seem'd to talk ;
Anon her lip as with deep scorn was curl'd !
And then in rapid movement seem'd to mock
And gibe some phantom ! now her arms she furl'd,

Like one who had convey'd some stern behest,
In high disdain upon her heaving breast !

LV.

A powerful reaction had ensu'd
In all his feelings ; Oscar seem'd to share
Her thoughts no longer ; she sought solitude ;
But mutter'd sounds, at times, would reach his ear,
Whose painful meaning he could not elude ;
Chang'd as he was himself, he could not bear,
Nor would have brook'd, from any other source,
Allusion to his sleepless soul's Remorse !

LVI.

A slaughter'd husband, and a wife betray'd,
Her own heart broken in that bitter wrong ;
His doom, for whom her bosom would have pray'd,
Had Reason been permitted to prolong
Her reign — that Sorrow, from these sources, made
Sole theme of her soliloquy and song,
Which comprehended all that most unmans us, —
May well be gather'd from the following stanzas, —

LVII.

Which, at day's close, she carol'd to an air
Wild as her woe ! that seem'd to pierce the sky,
As if some sympathy it sought for there !
It was the voice of one who wish'd to die !
And touch'd the heart as with the power of prayer,
That seem'd to worship in that minstrelsy !
The words themselves were burning, dark, and strong,
Expressive of some unforgiven wrong : —

1.

“ A Spirit hath breath'd o'er that desolate flower,
And, lo ! it revives in the midst of the shower !
But the storm and the sunshine are equally vain,
It can suffer no blight, bear no blossom again !
Then let the winds howl, and the tempest rage on,
They can wake in *thy* heart no emotion save one —
Thy vigil by day, and thy vision by night,
And the thought that pursues thee in darkness and light !
Thy future is fearful, thy past is a wreck,
Thou stand'st like the mariner on the lost deck,

When the storm hath subsided, whose last, sullen moan,
Is the knell of the perish'd! — O why left alone!
Thou lookest abroad o'er the desolate waste,
The plank that sustains thee is sinking full fast!
There's no sheltering bay, and no speck on the sea,
And the sun that has set, shall rise never for *thee*!"

LVIII.

Th' allusion in these verses was too plain,
And was as palpable in those that follow;
Through Oscar's ear they pass'd into his brain,
And struck upon it with a sort of hollow
Dull agony, like clanking of a chain;
His heart beat thick,—and, as he tried to swallow,
There was that nervous gurgling in the throat,
Attendant upon terror, as we note:*

* "On approaching the gallows," says one who was present at the execution of Major Andre, "he trod upon a stone, and his foot slipped; and I could distinctly hear that difficult swallow in the throat, which indicates uneasiness of mind."

Andre's conduct, on the occasion of his capture, has nowhere, that I have seen, elicited the comments to which it was so plainly obnoxious. His self-possession forsook him at the

2.

“The shock and surprise — Love’s confusion ! are o’er,
And the sorrow that shrives thee, shall shrive thee no
more !

The foe to thy love, though a Lover ! shall feel
An anguish more keen than the stroke of the steel ;
A suffering deeper than that he hath wrought —
A remorse without fear, and a mind without thought !
A wreck and a ruin his age shall be driven,
With no shelter on earth, and no refuge in Heaven !
On his head shall be pour’d out the phials of wrath,
And no hope shall illumine his desolate path !

moment when he most needed it. His fate hung upon the choice he should make of *one word*, and he chose the wrong one ! — “Are you from above, or below ?” asked his captors. Had he said “above” — although he believed himself within the British lines — yet, his captors being Americans, he would most probably have been suffered to pass ; and had they been English, still, in the end, all would have been right. But he said “below” — and he perished ! as he deserved to do. War — which, unless strictly defensive, is a hideous atrocity — sanctions no greater abomination than that of the office of a *spy*, an office which, except under circumstances of impending peril to either of the contending parties, no honorable man should ever propose, and no brave man consent to assume.

His shroud shall be darkness, his tomb shall be fire,
His companion the worm that can never expire!"

LIX.

'To be talk'd *at*, as many of us know,
Is most unpleasant, though the voice but mutters ;
But how shall we depict the hopeless woe,
'The sudden heart-quake, when the tongue that utters,
Is one from which Love's words were wont to flow ?
'The subject tries to speak, and only stutters !
Mankind have chang'd, and suddenly assume
The character and color of his doom !

LX.

The halls of Eblis ! and the unseen fire,
The helpless hand upon the hopeless breast !
Uncomfortable feelings, that conspire
To convince him he's essentially unblest !
A friend betrays us, and we can retire
In cold contempt, that robs us of no rest ;
But with lost love, we feel that all is lost —
We are alone upon a desert coast !

LXI.

In youth we bear these things a good deal better,
But Oscar felt he was no longer young,
Life wore the sternness of the "bitter letter;"
The creature of emotions that had wrung
His heart in boyhood, he now felt the fetter
Press heavily; his pride, too, had been stung
In many trying trials; altogether,
He was exceedingly "under the weather"!

LXII.

Ah, happy! did the soul ne'er droop, but keep
Forever onward! like that fabled Bird
Of Paradise,* whose pinions never sleep!
Beautiful creature! when the heart hath heard
How thou ascendest, night and day, the steep
And void abyss, undaunted, undeterr'd!
Thine eye's far-piercing glance surveying worlds,
With wing that never falters, and ne'er furls, —

* Supposed to be ever on the wing.

LXIII.

The heart hath wept to think that, unlike thee,
O Bird ! that lav'st thy pinions in the light,
Drinking its radiance ! it is doom'd to be
Sojourner 'neath this cloudy vail of night,
With no companion but its agony !
Inmate of a dungeon barr'd the bright,
The ever-teeming glories that surround
Thee without blight, with wing that know'st no bound !

LXIV.

In Oscar's youth — how credulous is youth !
A sort of Tasso,* who, till time shall teach
Her downright lessons, never learns the truth ;
Life lures, the fatal apple in our reach !
And all are Eves, if they but speak in sooth ;
The self-same penalty attends the breach
Of a strange trust — though free in the infraction,
It still incurs a terrible exaction !

* Prevailing poet, whose undoubting mind
Believ'd the magic wonders that he sung !

LXV.

He had in youth what Milton's daring pen,
Steep'd in the fervor of the Seraphim !
Hath term'd "Empyrean conceits" — but then,
The time, the place — ah me ! both now are dim,
And fading never to recur again !
The cup which once had sparkl'd to the brim,
Subsiding left his manhood but the lees —
Or spectres, in the shape of Memories !

LXVI.

Farewell to Youth ! and, ah, with youth farewell
The credulous fancies that mistook, for truth,
Things upon which 'twere madness now to dwell !
The charm unwinds ! and all that once seem'd sooth,
Time disenchants, and so dissolves the spell ;
Then once again a long adieu to Youth !
The love of youth is always a "First love,"
And when did that remembrance fail to move ?

LXVII.

And she who, like a star, had pierc'd the gloom
And chas'd the shadows from his early brow,

With whom he felt identified his doom,
Herself had pass'd into a shadow now,
Receding, till it settl'd on the tomb !
She had become more calm, and seem'd to bow
At times beneath a sense of her sad lot ;
Save this, all other things appear'd forgot !

LXVIII.

Present, or absent, persons were the same,
She talk'd with shadows !—Oscar held her hand,
She smil'd — but only knew him in his name ;
Her mind went wandering in other land,
Hopeless, and dark ! — And frequently he came,
And sat by her, and then the self-same bland
Smile past across her features, without meaning—
For hope and heart on other worlds were leaning !

LXIX.

And as he gaz'd upon that still fair face,
That met his own, and turn'd away unmov'd !
His heart pray'd inwardly for God's own grace
To give it strength ! — for only *then* he prov'd

The anguish that awaits us, where we place,
In one selected object, so belov'd !
A still-abiding, concentrated trust,
Until conviction flashes from the dust !

LXX.

Thy dark and dreadful certainty, O Death !
Remembrancer and Moralist, who sittest
On our right hand, presiding o'er the breath
Of mortals,—as the Skeleton deem'd fittest
Memorial, where Pleasure binds the wreath
On Eastern brows,* and the dark Maiden flittest
With cheek where mirth seems sadden'd by the gloom
Of semblances still pointing to the tomb !

LXXI.

The certainty that what we love must die !
A still-recurring thought, that saddens deepest
When solitude unveils the mental eye
To see the truth of that which the world keepest

* See Moore's "Epicurean," for a striking account of this Oriental custom.

Disguis'd beneath its garish pageantry, —
Might well excuse the passionate grief that weepeth !
Dewing the nightly pillow with its tears, —
Alas, that sorrow but the more endears !

LXXII.

Cold hearts reserve such tribute for the dead,
The first and latest shed in that last loss !
The requiem sung, the ceremony said,
The marble plac'd — 't is done ! these throw a gloss
(Especially the "Sables" — if well made !)
Over appearances — all is but dross ;
Is it a wife ? — the feast and funeral o'er, —
What then ? Why take another, to be sure !

LXXIII.

'T is the world's fashion, and it mocks the breach,
Because it is a thing extremely rare ;
The pang that cuts keen hearts, can never reach
The frozen bosom ! and the secret tear,
Dissolv'd from feelings that you cannot teach, —
Though hourly shed, must be conceal'd with care,

By those who would not wear upon their sleeve
Their hearts for “daws to peck at” — ’tis their leave.

LXXIV.

“They jest at scars, that never felt a wound,” —
And for the simple reason, they’ve no feeling;
But the time *will* come when these bosoms, bound
On Ixion’s wheel, shall undergo a peeling
Will find a voice, like cry of beaten hound;
The stringent castigation, sharp, but healing,
Of Phlegethon, attemper’d in his ire,
Where erring spirits are reclaim’d by fire!

LXXV.

Where *are* the shades of Cæsar, Pompey, — where
Is Cincinnatus, and the Scipios?
Where’s Anthony, and She — that fatal Fair!
Whose charms prov’d but the sources of his woes?
Where is that Roman who knew how “to bear,
As well as act”? * Where’s Fabius? Who knows?

* Mutius Scævola.

Where's he of Platea and Marathon ?
And last, not least, where is Napoleon ?

LXXVI.

These were the men who set the world in arms !
Will any tell us where their ghosts are gone ?
How they exist for whom life had no charms
Distinct from mighty battles lost and won !
Instead of spurring steeds to fierce alarms,
(Now that " Othello's occupation's " done !)
Have they turn'd Choristers, or Priests ? Do they
Sing hourly canticles, or preach ? Which, pray ?

LXXVII.

Alas ! to think that Alexander should
Turn Rhapsodist, e'en after Lee's example !
Renounce his " Beaver," and the " Granic flood ;"
To try his powers at a different sample !
Think you the conqueror of Därius* would
Have wept at having no more worlds to trample,

* The reader will be so obliging as to place the accent on the first syllable of the name — contrary to usage, but in accordance with that *license*, which is of far anterior authority.

Had he foreseen his destiny hereafter?

The Fiend's arch mock, who fear'd the world's dread
laughter!

LXXVIII.

Sharper than death, thy victory, O Grave!

Teaches a bitter lesson — to sustain,

Hard task! the loss of one we could not save!

We weep the more because we weep in vain;*

And if the voice of Grief be heard to rave,

'Tis not the closing eye, that shuts out pain, —

'Tis the last loss, when the tomb closes o'er

All that we lov'd, and shall behold no more!†

LXXIX.

'Tis the conviction, flashing from the dust,

That we are mourners! that the life indeed

Is past; the idol broken, and the trust

A mockery! 'tis from this wound we bleed;

* A similar reason for tears, was assigned by one of the Catos.

† See (in Moore's "Life" of him) some very touching reflections, by Sheridan, on the death of his first wife (alas, for his faith!) the beautiful "Maid of Bath."

If the heart break not in that passion's gust,
But live — 'tis as the perish'd Ocean weed,
Cast by the waters on the barren shore,
Where sun and breeze are vain — it blooms no more !

LXXX.

Tints of the dying day were spread abroad
Upon the sunset sky, till, melting, they
In characters of flame no longer glow'd,
But softly stealing glided into gray ;
High o'er the Abbey forth the young Moon rode,
Its towers dissolv'd in the voluptuous ray ;
Which, glowing there, and glass'd within the stream,
Gave forth, as 'twere, the image of a Dream ! *

* In a volume of posthumous poems, by Mrs. Radcliffe, there are some half dozen lines, descriptive of an Abbey seen by twilight, that could only have emanated from the wonderful pen that sketched "The Italian" :

"Now evening fell o'er all the vale,
Shaded each tower and turret pale ;
Whilst, shapeless, huge, obscure as doom,
The Abbey stood in steadfast gloom ;
Vast, indistinct, and lone,
Like Being from a world unknown."

Each line of the above is worth volumes of the "flesh and

LXXXI.

And over all there reign'd a deep repose,
And in the sky Night's solemn hosts were met ;
While from the clear, lull'd lake, at times arose
A floating whisper ! in its mirror set,
The Druid oak its antique shadow throws,
Crowning the stream with leafy coronet ;
While, heard at intervals, a fountain near
A bubbling freshness breath'd upon the air.

LXXXII.

Won by the solemn stillness of the hour,
That charm'd even Echo, slumb'ring on the hill !
Oscar became a sharer in its power,
And sought the terrace, which, star-lit and still,
Partook the influence shed o'er tree and tower ;
The watch-dog bay'd remote the while,—and, shrill,
High pois'd in air, at intervals was heard
The sudden scream of solitary bird !

blood of this world," although their authors may not think so ;
in fact, as fine poetry, they transcend all prose.

LXXXIII

The clock struck "One"! and silence, like a spell,
Conjoin'd with sleep, now reign'd the Abbey through;
For each had slunk as to his separate cell;
While, ever and anon, one sleeper drew
Such sounds as on the close and pent air fell
With a deep dissonance, yet not untrue,
As being quite in character with the hour,
When the mind almost deems the dead have power!

LXXXIV.

The very silence ach'd upon the ear!
Till the sick sense could scarce discriminate,—
Mistaking distant sounds for things more near;
If but a coal fall clinking from the grate,
Or sudden crack from the untrodden stair,
Start into sound! they rouse us from our state
Of mental musing, or of watchfulness,
When most we feel the power to curse, or bless!

LXXXV.

The world shut out, the soul absorb'd within,
Existence then seems curdl'd to an hour!

Aloof from earth, as we had never been,
The mind attests its own mysterious power !
The thousand thoughts, the sorrow and the sin,
Which we perforce partake of as a dower,
Subsiding when the stale pursuit is past,
Subdu'd, recoil upon the heart at last !

LXXXVI.

Bath'd in the deep of the voluptuous light,
Doth Oscar's soul to other worlds take wing,
Soaring triumphant in its radiant flight,
Or, darkling, still in earth's low shadow cling ?
What spell is in the air, or on the night ?
What dark Magician doth his sorcery fling
Across his path, that, wildly pausing there,
He seems to wither like a thing of fear ?

LXXXVII.

A form, like statue, mute and motionless,
Stood high upon the turret's topmost verge ;
The night-breeze sported with the snowy dress,
And a low sound, like murmur of the surge,

Pass'd into silence ! — when, in suddenness,
More rapid than the fleeting of that dirge,
The spirit of the Greek Girl pass'd away,
Cold and extinct at Oscar's feet she lay !

LXXXVIII.

The shock had been so sudden, that he stood
As the unbreathing marble ! when, at last,
Roll'd back upon his brain the burning blood,
An instinct told him that the life was past—
Only transferr'd to mansions of the Good !
But though he had long seen that she was fast
Approaching to that bourn, yet gentleness
Had been her nature, and deserv'd no less !

LXXXIX.

And morning found him kneeling by the side
Of that pale form, himself as turn'd to stone !
For him the world had pass'd away ! hope, pride,
Its passions and its purposes, were gone !
O never more could the returning tide
Waft him to pleasure ! — he must end alone

His journey, — watching with sad eyes in vain —
No star shall rise upon his path again !

XC

Her love was not the growth of years — the flower
That springs to sudden life with summer's rain,
The generous blossom of a single shower !
Was not more brief ! nor did it bloom in vain —
An age absorb'd in that tumultuous hour !
Too full, too perfect ! to recur again ;
Thus all things in their turn, at last, subside, —
Her passion sleeps, as slept her early pride !

XCI.

And Oscar ! he scarce knew which way to turn,
Unless he should turn Author ! and why not ?
Since fools, and not a few, contriv'd to earn
A name as paltry as the page they blot !
His temper, however, was much too stern
To bear an author's most uncertain lot ;
And Gifford might proceed to overhaul him
In his strong way, which would be sure to gall him !

XCII.

To have one's pages thumb'd by people who
But open them to find, perhaps, a flaw ;
Condemn'd, in turn, to those who never knew
The luxury even of an annual thaw,
Beyond the temperature of Billet-doux !
And thus th' unhappy Bard is doom'd to draw
Upon his brain, extracting it on paper,
To furnish forth, perhaps, a dirty wrapper !

XCIII.

It is a cold reflection — when all's done,
To have one's feelings and one's thoughts slur'd over ;
To feel that in the crowd we move as one
Condemn'd, as 'twere, between two worlds to hover,
And find the quiet of the mind in none !
To look around us, and to see no cover
Laid for us at Life's feast ! where none remain
To welcome the sad Stranger back again !

XCIV.

Oscar concluded, finally, to leave
His friends behind — his foes he kept before him ;

The first he fear'd, for they were wont to weave
Snares for his feet — the last could never floor him !
But they were nothing. He had learn'd to grieve
As those who hope not ! and, whate'er came o'er him,
The future had no further trials in store,
No joy to greet, no pang to wound him more !

XCV.

And careless still he mingl'd with the crowd
Who daily dam the threshold of life's door ;
His words were few, his laughter never loud ;
His thoughtful brow a sober sadness wore,
And, when unseen, his head was sometimes bow'd
Upon a breast which had laid up in store
Food for reflection, which, could such things slay,
Had spar'd the sleepless night, and long, long day !

XCVI.

And those who saw him droop — for Grief is blind
To the immediate objects of all eyes ;
The senses slumber with the absent mind,
And all of life's familiar presence dies !

Or if as men they mingle with mankind,
Whom sorrow sears, they make a sacrifice —
But to no purpose — the averted eye,
And ill-represt contempt, may tell us *why*.

XCVII.

When absent, even to himself — his mind
'Transported to the past, and perish'd! — then,
A sensibility much too refin'd,
Or something as inscrutable to men —
Excessive pride! — were sev'rally assign'd
As reasons for his reveries. Again:
Had he not thrown his counters in the stream,
And walk'd thro' life the creature of a dream?

XCVIII.

His sensibility was only such
As genius gives, his pride its consciousness;
His fallen fortunes touch'd him not so much, —
'Though money's as essential, more or less,
To most men, as to old age is its crutch;
None knew, and he himself would not confess

The unseen cause of griefs thus strongly cherish'd,
But — many things had cross'd his path, and perish'd !

XCIX.

His daily look and manner plainly told
His thoughts and feelings were not with the hour ;
The former had acquir'd an air of old
Remembrances — and these are Passion's dower !
In youth all fervor, in his manhood cold,
Was there in time to work such change the power ?
Let those whose early hearts outstripp'd their years,
Answer, — why Tenderness should close in tears !

C.

He took his hat, with careless glove in hand,
And, with some feelings useless 'twere to state,
Sought the accustom'd ship, and saw the land
Of all his race — his native land ! where late
He had — but there are things should not be scann'd
Too nicely ; he was gone ! no lurking hate
He left behind him ; his high spirit scorn'd
That feeling then, and the self-exile mourn'd !

CI.

And he was gone ! and where his boyhood grew,
His lonely age must hope not to repose ;
The world to him was now no longer new,
And full before him ! Where it was he chose
To end his pilgrimage, none ever knew ;
His sun went down, I fear, not as it rose !
For gifts of genius, like the lightning's play,
Are but the presage of a stormy day !*

* " There are qualities of heart and mind, which, though partaken of only by superior persons, promise," said Charlotte Corday, " but a stormy life."

END OF CANTO II.

NOTES TO CANTO II.

NOTE 1. Page 68.

An Angel link'd her fortunes with a Devil!

MRS. CHARLOTTE EMBURY has written some verses commemorative of the Empress Josephine, which combine unusual force, with a good deal of that high, queen-like, yet womanly feeling, which characterized, in so remarkable a degree, the "Martyr-Spirit" who once shared the diadem of Napoleon. It is impossible to read these lines, — which are a true reflection, in words, of the elevated character of the Empress, — without an emotion approaching to adoration for that exemplary and devoted woman, who so thoroughly appreciated the soul of Napoleon; and who laid down her own happiness, as a wife, at the shrine of his glory, as the "world's great Victor." Her sympathy with his fortunes, — her constancy and high-toned honor, — were requited, if not with ingratitude, yet with a feeling very nearly a-kin to it — ultimate indifference. By a selfish and cruel policy, she was banished the presence of the man she idolized; and her place supplied by an insipid Austrian Princess — mean as she was heartless — who, false to the ties alike of honor and of feeling, deserted her husband and son — not relishing the gloom

into which the glory of the one had subsided ; and forgetting the other in her love for — her Chamberlain ! She was eminently worthy of the *tribute* which Byron paid to her in his “ Age of Bronze.”

NOTE 2. Page 89.

For, being the forfeit of a deep disease.

When the Moralists tell us, that reason, conscience, the moral sense, &c., are given to us for the regulation of our lives, and proceed to denounce, as bad men, all whose conduct is not strictly based upon their rules, they are met by the physiologists with the following language, which is well calculated to arrest attention : — “ Excitement, beyond healthy action, is fever of the brain, according to its degree. This produces proportionally morbid manifestations ; and morbid images and associations are apt to take place. Ideas are produced more vividly and more [rapidly than usual ; nor is it in the power of the mind to control them ; for, being the physical results of organic agencies, they are not under the command of reason and reflection.” (Newnham, on the Effects of Physical Influences on the Brain, p. 62.) Now if it be said that all this — that is, the “ excitement beyond healthy action,” spoken of above, as conducing to the effects there enumerated — is but the consequence of *giving way to the temper* (for this is the favorite language of the moralists,) I can only reply, that this undue “ excitement ” is referred, by the physiologists themselves, to “ irritating circumstances,” “ depressing passions,” &c. — and who shall say that the

liability to these influences is not in itself as much the “physical result of organic agencies,” (of *organization*) as are the effects thus ascribed to it? The brain, or blood (the last acting on the first) is not tempered alike in all men — being in some far more excitable than in others — so that the same “irritating circumstances,” of which Mr. Newnham speaks, shall have incalculably less effect upon some minds than upon others; and here (if there be any truth in physiology) the whole matter — I was about to say mystery — but that it is, assuredly, intelligible enough to all, perhaps, except the moralists — is explained. Who shall say, I repeat, that the “irritating circumstances,” the “depressing passions,” here spoken of, shall produce the same effects, for instance, upon a poetical (excitable) and a phlegmatic (unexcitable) brain; upon the “quick bosom” of a Byron, and the cool, plodding head of a “business member” of Parliament — Mr. Joseph Hume, let me suppose? No! — before these complacent moralists shall assume to prescribe the conduct of their fellow-men, let them, if they can, first show that the same susceptibility to moral and physical influences, exists in all the race. Until they can do this, their philosophy is an atrocious libel; and their judgments a moral murder.

NOTE 3. Page 89.

The pulse beats high within the temples still!

One of the settlers on our western borders, says a valued friend, had used a good deal of argument to a Cherokee Chief, in order to dissuade him from a hostile expedition on which

he was about to set out. The Indian listened with fixed attention, and, when his adviser had ceased, replied, that what he had said was undoubtedly very just; but that his feelings and resentments were not thus to be reasoned away. "Your arguments," said he, "are like good medicine, which yet often fails of effect—the patient takes it, *but the pulse still continues high in his temple.*" The highly imaginative and even plaintive character of the North American Indian, is further illustrated in the following reply of a Seminole Warrior to the Commissioners employed by the United States government to hold a "Talk" with his "Nation," at which I was present. Various arguments were resorted to with a view to reconcile them to the plan of emigration west of the Mississippi, that had been *decided* on by the government as best comporting with the interests of both parties. The fertility of the soil, salubrity of climate, and beauty of country, were all set forth, with the hope of inducing them peaceably to pass over into the land of promise. When the Commissioners ceased, a Chief rose, and delivered himself thus:—"You advise us to move to the new country in the West, where you tell us we shall live more happily. The white man goes into a low, unsightly 'Bottom,' and there sees a beautiful flower. How much better it would be, he says, to take this flower to some spot where the sun can shine on it, and the air visit it more freely.

"The white man takes it from its bed, sends it to that new and sunny spot — *and in a little time it dies !*"

NOTE 4. Page 92.

A verdant lawn embrac'd the Abbey round.

In presuming to meddle with this Gothic subject, I ought, perhaps, to say a word with a view to propitiate the celebrated author of the tale of the "Pilot," who professes to entertain profound contempt for all *such* topics. On approaching that portion of his admirable work, (the tale in question) in which he has, *very* reluctantly, he says, to describe an *Abbey* (that occupied by his "Howard family" in England), Mr. Cooper avails himself of the occasion to express his scorn for those understandings which delight, he says, in magnifying the mysteries of haunted houses, echoing galleries, and walls that have ears — preferring, as he alleges, to address himself to the "flesh and blood" of this world, and not the airy nothings of an imaginary one. Opinions like these challenge criticism. They do violence to some of the most cherished recollections and associations of a large class of readers, in seeking to disparage, and in a tone of supercilious sarcasm, the sources from which they are derived; while they imply, rather too directly, a preference for that class of works in which Mr. Cooper himself so confessedly excels. But does he not stand yet more gravely committed? In affecting to deride the labors of those minds which, soaring beyond this, have expatiated in imaginary worlds, he betrays what has very much the appearance — I will not say of ignorance of some of the most profound sources of fiction — but of insensibility to those creations of genius, those "Beings of the Mind" — as Byron so justly and finely expresses it — that exercise such won-

derful sorcery over congenial intellects — even as the mighty dead are said to “rule us from their urns.” That “longing after immortality,” which is an instinct of the soul of man, finds grateful food and a soothing field in elements like those usually served up to us in the works of which I speak. This feeling derives measureless relief in being permitted occasionally to soar beyond the every-day, coarse, and too often degrading, influences of earth, and to mingle with celestial worlds! — and, forgetting its “muddy vesture of decay,” to bathe itself in the unspeakable bliss of the emancipated spirit! He who knows not, *feels* not this, may, indeed, possess talent — but he is a stranger to the inspirations of that genius to which we are indebted for “The Ghost Seer,” “The Monk,” “The Italian,” and the other works of that class, which will be read, admired, and *felt*, long after the entire library of our modern novels is forgotten. Let me not be misunderstood. Mr. Cooper is one of the few masters in his line of which the age can boast. I am, in common with the rest of the world, a very great admirer of the “Last of the Mohicans,” and a few others of his tales — so much so, that I could read them a second time; and it is for this reason (his great powers as a writer) that I have been led to notice the slur he has levelled at the “better Brothers” of another class, whose genius and works neither he nor his excel.

While the above was in the press, intelligence was received of the death of Mr. Cooper. No one — I may be permitted to say — admired him, as a writer, more than myself; and, in commenting, as I have done, upon what I conceived to be an error of opinion on his part, I had no desire to detract (had I,

indeed, been capable, in any sense of the word, of doing so) from his distinguished and well-earned reputation as a novelist. He was, as I have said, a master in that line. His Indian tales, and tales of the sea, have never been equalled; and many a century is likely to elapse, ere the literary annals of our country shall have been graced by works of similar merit in their kind.



TO THE GOLD SEARCHER.

Go ! shut them from thy heart,
The ties that bind thee ;
Go ! shun th' accursed mart,
Where woes that blind thee —
Like Gladiator reeling
Before those stony eyes !
Make thee a sacrifice —
Pride, passion, feeling,
Virtues no more in *thee* ;
And only watch'd to see
How the pang searches — the keen sword
Cuts to the core, and no complaining word —
Save the strong curse ! which, could it kill,
Would be the lightning to strike down,
And strangle in th' arena's blood,
The cold barbarians, who still,

In purple sheen, rank as the down upon
The Ulcer-flower, murmur — “Good !”*

Go ! to the yellow mine,
Mark how those monarchs shine
In golden pomp ! beneath their sway
See myriads bend the knee, and pray
Mercy for those who have it not !
The monied Molochs, at whose shrine
All that might bless the humble lot —
Contentment — ’neath its tree and vine ;
Love, ardent as the day-god’s ray !
And Innocence, as cherub mild ;
Matron and maid, youth, age — a prey
To the insatiate thirst, are laid — till, wild

* Genius and Adversity are the accustomed gladiators upon whose dying struggles the world is wont to look down with all the complacency of the spectators at the Roman circus. It may be remarked, too, that the criminal laws of Great Britain, and, I am sorry to add, of some of our own States, could they find a tongue, would, without doubt, express their satisfaction at the horrors they give rise to, pretty much after the manner of a Claudius or a Caligula.

With unrequited pains,
To see their blood-bought gains
Melted into a diadem,
That scorches not the villain's brow !
They take by fraud what force had taken —
When, lo ! the roof which wrong had shaken,
Is crushed — and with it tree and stem —
Indignant rage is silent now !*

Go ! to the sun's western grave,
Where shines the light of the golden mines !
Bondman to fortune, wouldst thou save
Thy heartstrings from consuming fires ?
Lo ! where the mother pines —
The wailing babe — its fount of life dried up

* The enormous taxation of England and the continent, arising out of the character of their respective governments, and which is only a part of that gigantic system of plunder waged against the many for the benefit of the few — together with the heartless conscription enforced in the factories of the former — are here represented as arrayed against those Virtues and Affections which they ultimately annihilate !

By unseen sorrow ! Bid that cup
Pass from them.

Go ! not with desires
Unchasten'd, unsubdu'd
By the great Soul in solitude ;
The lofty spirit, at whose side
Walks its Creator — the Good Man !
Whose pure affections — rais'd, refin'd
By the indissoluble mind,
Serene — above or vulgar pride,
Or paltry lust of lucre — can,
Like the broad oak, at whose base builds
(To Faith to Mercy lifts the eye !)
The ant — dispense sweet charity,
With healing on its wing — o'er ills
They feel, and faults they never knew.

Go ! to the golden West,
To give the weary rest !
To save, as life declines, the few
Remnants of peace the world hath left
To those who never knew its ways —

The gentle and the gifted ! O to these
Be as the dew unto the earth beneath,
For are they not as orphans, all bereft
Of sterner guards, where all betrays !
So build them up, that the high soul,
Which draws its inspiration from disease —
Shall feel no more the damps of death
Upon its heaven-ward wings grow cold,
Ere yet it hath attain'd its star-lit goal !
Damps from this earth — its poor neglect
Of those who do redeem it ! till, grown old —
Rather in sorrow than in years —
They sink into the tomb ! from which a light
Goes up that warms the world —
Supplied by him who wither'd in the shade !
A frequent lesson, the proud intellect
Sees fall unheeded on the dull, cold ears
Of those who are like gropers in the night,
Half reason and half instinct !

Yes, unfurl'd

Thy white sail on the gentle deep
Of the Pacific, Searcher, Go !

And if thou never didst degrade,
Having the power — nor yet oppress
Thy innocent brother, nor work woe
To the confiding bosom, — He, who fed
His servant in the desert, thee shall keep
Untempted in the wilderness !
Where if its golden guerdon wait thee not,
And some vain mocker shall deride thy lot,
Be comforted — for, lo ! the Book of Fate —
The rich man, and the beggar at his gate !

KOSSUTH TO HIS HUNGARIANS.

Lo, Maxzars !* the dawn of that morning draws near,
The brightest or darkest on History's page —
When thy falchions, that gleam like the Falcon in air,
Must bear Glory aloft in the battle they wage !

The fears of the timid, the doubts of the tame,
No counsel can give, and no courage inspire ;
In the hearts of the bold must be nurtur'd the flame
That for ages hath lit Freedom's altar and pyre.

The craven and false, who would yield or betray
The rights of thy soil, and the blood of thy brave,

* For the sake of convenience, I have substituted the name as pronounced, for the name as it is written.

Thy wrath shall o'ertake at no far-distant day,
In the traitor's dark doom, the deep brand of the slave!

Tho' the hosts of the Tyrant should darken the sun,
Thy banners shall float in the shade that succeeds;
Lo, the words on the walls of the Muscovite Hun!
The Assyrian's doom is in store for his deeds.

From the ashes of those who in darkness went down,
The Martyrs of Poland! a river of flame
Is bursting, to whelm in its rage cowl and crown,
And bears on its breast, Kosciusko! thy name.*

On the sleeping Volcano's cold brow there is bloom,
'The garlands prepar'd for the harvest of death;

* At the time when these lines were written (eighteen months ago), Hope appeared in momentary gleam upon the political horizon of Poland. Alas, that hope, in the words of Moore,—

“ was born in fears,
And nurs'd by vain regrets;
Like winter suns it rose in tears,
Like them in tears it sets ! ”

In the Despot's deep purple behold the same doom,
O'er his gardens hath pass'd Freedom's hurricane
breath !

Her voice hath gone forth ! and, from mountain to
main,

Her people have heard it — her sons are awake !
Save the few, the false-hearted ! whom Honor in vain
Would impel, as she points to their fetters, to *break* !

Then let the slaves wear them ! till prone in the dust
The foot of the tyrant hath trod them at last ;
The scorn of the free — a world's wonder — disgust !
When the future shall chide, will they blush for the past ?

When the fires that slumber in Erin's green turf,
Shall burst o'er the grave of her Emmett anew ;
When the soul of Fitzgerald, ne'er made for a Serf,
Shall prompt her to draw the same weapon *he* drew, —

'Then 'Tyranny's steps, amid Liberty's bloom,
Shall show like those prints that in Autumn appear ;

In the midst of deep verdure invested with gloom,—
A marvel, a warning! indelible there.*

* The scorched steps here referred to, not unfrequently arrest the eye of the traveller in our Western wilds. When the grass becomes crisped by frost, it is exceedingly brittle; and the foot of a man, or even of a child, is sufficiently heavy to break it completely down, and kill it; and thus, when the sun has thawed the frosty rime from the fields, these footsteps appear brown and bare, in the midst of the surrounding and flourishing green.

TO HIM WHO CAN ALONE SIT FOR
THE PICTURE.

IF to be free from aught of guile,
Neither to do nor suffer wrong ;*
Yet in thy judgments gentle still,
Serene — inflexible in will,
Only where some great duty lies :
Prone to forgive, or, with a smile,
Reprove the errors that belong
To natures that fall far below
The height of thy empyreal brow :
Of self to make a sacrifice,
Rather than view another's woe ;

* “ A clear, unblemished character,” says Junius, “ comprehends not only the integrity that will not offer, but the spirit that will not submit, to an injury ; and, whether it belong to an individual, or to a community, is the foundation of peace, of independence, and of safety.”

And, guided by the same fix'd law
Supreme, to yield, in argument,
The bootless triumph that might draw
Down pain upon thy opponent :
By Fate oppress'd, "in each hard instance tried,"
Still seen with Honor walking by thy side ;
E'en in those hours when all unbend,
And by some thoughtless word offend,
Thy conscious spirit, great and good,
Neither upborne, nor yet subdu'd,
Impress'd by sense of human ill,
Preserv'st its even tenor still ;
While 'neath that calm, clear surface lie
Thoughts worthy of Eternity !
And passions — shall I call them so ?
Celestial attributes ! that glow
Radiant as wing of Seraphim,
Lighting thy path, in all else dim.
Plac'd on their lofty eminence,
Thou see'st the guerdons that to thee belong,
Pass'd to the low-brow'd temple, burn intense —
Standing between thee and the throng

Of noble minds, thy great compeers !
And still the same serenity appears,
Like star in its own solitude —
Setting its seal on thy majestic blood !
If elements like these could give
The record that might bid them live,
The mighty dead — Saint, Sophist, Sage,
Achilles in his tent —
Might claim in vain a brighter page,
A haughtier monument.*

* Of the original of this imperfect sketch, I can with entire truth say, in the language of Atterbury, speaking of Berkeley, — “I did not think that so much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and so much humility,” — and, in the present instance, I may add, — so much and such uniform dignity, united to the highest grade of personal intrepidity, and a glowing fancy worthy of the “young-eyed Cherubim,” — “was the portion of any but Angels.”

TWILIGHT THOUGHTS.



YE'RE fading in the distance dim,
 Illusions of the heart !
Yes, one by one, recall'd by Him—
 I see ye all depart !

The swelling pride, the rising glow,
 The spirit that would mount !
The mind, that sought all things to know, —
 And drank at that dread fount,

Over whose waters, dark and deep,
 Their sleepless vigils still
Those melancholy Daughters keep,
 Or by the sacred Hill !

Deep Passion's concentrated fire,
The soul's volcanic light !
A Phœnix on her fun'ral pyre,
The Eden of a night !

The wish to be all things — to soar,
And comprehend the universe ;
Yet doom'd to linger on the shore,
And feel our fetter'd wings a curse !

To drink in Beauty at a glance,
Its graces and its bloom ;
Yet weave the garlands of Romance,
To decorate the tomb !

To sigh for some dear Paradise,
Exempt from age or death ;
To live forever in those eyes,
And breathe but with that breath !

To be awaken'd from such dream,
With the remembrance clinging still !

Like flowers reflected in a stream,
Where all is chang'd and chill !

To feel that life can never bring
Its Rainbow back to our lost sky !
Plucks from the hand of death its sting,
The grave its victory !

TO CHRISTY'S MINSTRELS.*

MELODIOUS MINSTRELS ! whose enchanting shell
Weaves round the captive heart its wond'rous spell !
In some far hour, upon some distant shore,
Where thy sweet voices ne'er can reach me more,—
How oft will Fancy, pausing, list to hear
'Thy melting music on the midnight air !
Drink in each note, and feel a wish to pray
In the deep pathos of thy "Dearest Mae" !
Or — still as swells that other, saddest strain —
Murmur, O "Would I were a boy again !" †

* The New York Melodists.

† "Dearest Mae," and "Would I were a boy again," as sung and played by these Minstrels, subdue the heart to the very quality of the wonderful music !





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